

“Regardless of whether individual vets choose to use the title, it will not change the profession’s ongoing commitment to the very highest of standards.”

Dr who?

Vets can now use courtesy ‘Doctor’ title

Veterinary surgeons in the UK can now use the courtesy title ‘Doctor’, following a decision made at the March meeting of Council.

The news follows a consultation, to which 11,202 responses were received, where 81% were in favour of the change, 13% against, and 6% did not mind either way.

The issue had been raised in a bid to align the UK with international practice, providing greater clarity for the profession and offering reassurance to clients and the animal-owning public that all veterinary surgeons registered with the RCVS, regardless of where they qualified, have veterinary degrees of an appropriate standard. Most international veterinary surgeons use the title and, in Australia and New Zealand, this is frequently tied to registration and professional standing, rather than necessarily academic attainment.

“I am very pleased that the response from the consultation gave Council such clear direction and has allowed us to bring UK vets in line with the majority of veterinarians worldwide. It was my privilege to pose the question, which has been well and truly answered by the profession and the public,” says President Stuart Reid, who made a consideration of the use of the doctor title one of his commitments when he took office in July 2014.

“Whether one regards the decision as correcting a historical anomaly or simply providing greater clarity at home and abroad, there is no doubt that the issue

has generated huge interest. Yet regardless of whether individual vets choose to use the title, it will not change the profession’s ongoing commitment to the very highest of standards.”

Nearly 50% of respondents to the consultation were veterinary surgeons, 22% veterinary students, 21% animal-owning members of the public, and the rest were veterinary nurses, veterinary nurse students, practice managers and non-animal-owning members of the public.

“I am delighted that such a strong message came from both the public and the profession on this issue,” says CEO Nick Stace. “We have a responsibility to maintain confidence in the veterinary profession and this move will help underline to the public in particular that veterinary surgeons work to very high standards, regardless of where they qualified.”

Use of the title is optional, and guidance has been produced to support the change. It stresses that veterinary surgeons using the title should be careful not to mislead the public, and that it is important that the use of ‘Doctor’ or ‘Dr’ by a veterinary surgeon does not suggest or imply that they hold a human medical qualification or a PhD. If the title is used, the veterinary surgeon should use it in conjunction with their name and either the descriptor ‘veterinary surgeon’ or the postnominal letters ‘MRCVS’.

For the full wording, please see supporting guidance chapter 23 to the *Code of Professional Conduct*, paragraphs 23.6-23.8 (www.rcvs.org.uk/advertising).

Vets may start using the title straight away; details about how your RCVS Register entries can be updated will be issued over the coming months.



In this issue: List of Advanced Practitioners published, RCVS and VN Council candidates, Vet Futures – have your say, Mind Matters Initiative, Queen’s Medal awarded, CEO overview, debit card payments, ADR trial extension, Royal Charter celebrations, governance review, final PSS consultation, new advertising guidance, guest column – protecting whistleblowers, AP – why I applied, CPD audit, farewell to Freda, golden year for VNs, events update, DC reports, founding Charter, EBVM Skills Day 2015.

Election fever

Vote for RCVS and VN Council members

Forget Cameron and Farage, Miliband and Clegg, the really important elections this year are for RCVS and VN Council, where vets and veterinary nurses respectively can vote for their favourite candidates.

There are 11 candidates standing for RCVS Council in 2015, of whom six will be elected. Overall this

year there are six men and five women, including two existing Council members eligible for re-election. They are:

- Mr Niall Connell
- Mrs Joanna Dyer
- Professor Tim Greet
- Mrs Lynne Hill
- Mr Richard Hillman
- Dr Heidi Janicke
- Miss Hannah Jordan
- Mr Thomas Lonsdale
- Mr James Main
- Miss Katherine Richards
- Mr Peter Robinson

Three veterinary nurses are standing in this year's VN Council election of whom two will be elected.

This includes one existing VN Council member who is eligible for re-election. They are:

- Mrs Lucy Bellwood
- Mrs Elizabeth Cox
- Miss Marie Rippingale

Ballot papers and details of each candidate will be posted to all veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses eligible to vote in the week commencing 16 March. All votes must be cast, either online or by post, by 5pm on **Friday 24 April 2015**.

Earlier this month we invited members of both professions to 'Quiz the candidates' by putting their questions directly to all those standing for election. Each candidate was then asked to choose two questions to answer from all those received, and produce a video or audio recording of their answers. All recordings will be published on our website on Thursday 19 March.

"It's important that members of the veterinary professions choose who they want to sit on their governing Councils."

Gordon Hockey, RCVS Registrar, commented: "It's important that members of the veterinary professions choose who they want to sit on their governing Councils, so we always try to make the elections as interesting and engaging as possible.

"This year, we hope the provision of short videos, to accompany the usual written information, will encourage people to find out a little more about all those standing for election, and then use their vote."



Status symbol

Congratulating new Advanced Practitioners

This month we published the List of Advanced Practitioners containing the names of some 546 veterinary surgeons who successfully applied for the new accreditation, which acts as a 'middle tier' of recognition between those who hold the initial veterinary degree and RCVS Specialists.

The purpose of the List is to provide a clear indication to both the profession and the public of those veterinary surgeons who have demonstrated knowledge and experience in a particular area of veterinary practice. Those holding the status have demonstrated engagement with continuing professional development in their chosen field above-and-beyond our minimum requirements, as well as holding a postgraduate qualification in the relevant area.

Furthermore, the status is very much a public-facing one, as animal owners will be able to search specifically for Advanced Practitioners on our Find a Vet online search tool, and possession of the status will also be highlighted on our online Check the Register search tool.

Kit Sturgess, RCVS Council member and Chair of the Advanced Practitioner assessors panel, says: "I believe that the status will deliver benefits to all levels of the profession as well as the public. The

status has brought together the wide variety of similar qualifications that currently exist in a particular area under one heading, which should bring much needed clarity to all.

"We were absolutely delighted that the amount of applications for the status far exceeded our expectations, with 637 people applying."

"This convergence will clearly explain the knowledge and skills that a practice has in its advertising, literature and on practice websites, as well as making it easier for clients to understand the levels of knowledge and skills that are available if internal or external referral is required. Now that this initial cohort of Advanced Practitioners exists, the RCVS can strongly promote the status to the profession, stakeholders and the general animal-owning public.

"I am also confident that being an Advanced Practitioner will bring benefits to the holder as it will help to focus part of their CPD on the area of designation and encourage a broad range of CPD activities including attendance at national and international meetings to ensure that the holder is up-to-date with current best evidence and clinical

practice. For those Advanced Practitioners looking to the future, we are starting to consider the potential pathways that would make the status a stepping stone towards Specialist status and Fellowship."

Speaking at the March meeting of RCVS Council, Chris Tufnell, Chair of the Education Committee, also congratulated those who had gained the status and all those involved in the application and assessment process.

He said: "We were absolutely delighted that the amount of applications for the status far exceeded our expectations, with 637 people applying."

Successful applicants will now have five years until being recredited for the status. During this time they will be expected to carry out at least 125 hours of CPD in their designated field. Those whose qualifications did not explicitly include professional key skills (as found in the 'A' module of the Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice) will be expected to carry out CPD which fulfils this requirement. Guidance on carrying out CPD in these professional skills can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/advanced, along with the eligibility criteria for applicants and reaccréditation requirements for those holding the status.

A new application period will be announced later this year.

Chris Tufnell elected Vice-President

Equine practitioner to take up post in July

Chris Tufnell, an equine practitioner from Newbury, is to become the College's next Vice-President, following his election at RCVS Council in March. He will take up office at RCVS Day on 10 July 2015.

After a first degree in Agricultural and Environmental Science from the University of Newcastle, Chris worked for a year in Zambia before returning to study for a veterinary degree in Glasgow. He graduated in 1999 and initially worked in mixed practice in Herefordshire, where he was exposed to the rigours of agricultural practice in an area of family farms. He subsequently moved to West Berkshire where he is now sole principal of a five-vet equine and small animal practice.

It is his experience and outlook as a veterinary practitioner 'on the ground' that Chris hopes will help shape his term of office, although with a young family as well as a practice to look after, plus regular charity trips to Africa and India, he admits to life being fairly busy already. 'Just as many others have before me, it is the experience of the day-job which drives me to contribute to the

work of the RCVS. That said I do believe that I can contribute the time and dedication to fulfil this role. In fact I think it would be a very sad day when it was not possible for someone in my position to take up this challenge," he says.

Whilst fully appreciating the importance of lay involvement the College's regulatory functions, Chris is passionate about self-regulation and feels the RCVS is stronger, more relevant and more in touch because of it.

"Although the 1966 Veterinary Surgeons Act can look very outdated today, I do believe that its underlying premise has led to better animal welfare in this country," says Chris. "As a profession we cannot do everything, but as the ultimate guardians of animal welfare, I believe that we do a pretty good job. I therefore believe that the role for members of the profession at the RCVS and on its various committees has never been more important. It is a huge honour to serve the animals, the public and the profession but our contributions bring a reality and relevance by being grounded in the reality of all aspects of veterinary practice."



Vet Futures – join the debate

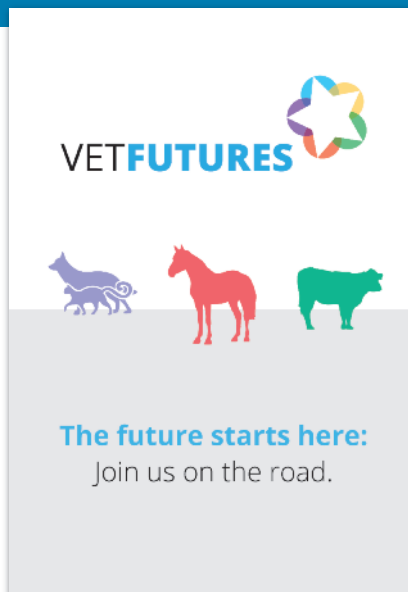
Roadshow events across the UK

Vet Futures, a joint venture between the RCVS and the British Veterinary Association (BVA) that aims to help the profession prepare for, and shape, its own future, was launched at the BVA Congress within the London Vet show in November last year.

By taking control and enabling the veterinary team to face its future well prepared, the project hopes to create a profession that is sustainable and relevant, while maintaining animal health and welfare at its core.

"A varied list was forthcoming, including the need for greater diversity, a call for a portfolio career to become the norm."

The first step has been to establish a robust evidence base from which to develop an action plan. The project's independent consultants have completed a literature review, looking at the current issues facing the profession both at home and abroad, as well as looking at trends in other comparable occupations. The issues were considered under the headings of demographic and economic changes, the competitive forces in the marketplace, client behaviour, mental health and wellbeing, and food supply and global imperatives.



Qualitative research was also carried out among vets, VNs, practice managers and stakeholder organisations, together with end-users of veterinary services, such as farmers, pet owners and those involved in food production.

The initial findings were reflected back to a meeting of the wider Vet Futures Group in January – which comprised representatives from across

the veterinary team and also users of veterinary services – and challenged them to name goals for the profession to meet by 2030.

A varied list was forthcoming, including the need for greater diversity; a call for a portfolio career to become the norm; for the profession to be the most trusted in the country; and the concept that the vet practice should become a one-stop-shop for all information, advice and support on animal welfare issues, adopting and adapting the community care approach in human healthcare.

Throughout the project we have also been collecting data via the internet, surveys, meetings and social media. Reports are published at www.vetfutures.org.uk and you can also have your say on our Topics of the Month at www.vetfutures.org.uk/discuss.

Join us on the road

A roadshow of meetings will take place over the next few months, in Belfast, Cambridge, Edinburgh, Exeter, Manchester and Swansea, at which we hope to hear the views of as many members of the veterinary team as possible. A leaflet outlining these free events is enclosed with this issue of *RCVS News*, and you can register at www.vetfutures.org.uk/events to attend.

The Vet Futures report, which will form the basis for an action plan, will be discussed in the autumn.

Mind Matters to tackle mental health and wellbeing issues

New project backed by the profession

In December 2014 we launched the Mind Matters Initiative, to help address mental health and wellbeing issues within the veterinary profession. In February we were able to confirm the RCVS Operational Board had agreed £100K of funding for the first year of the initiative, with a view to a similar amount per year for the subsequent four years.

Meanwhile, the College intends to contribute approximately £500K over the next five years to the Veterinary Surgeons' Health Support Programme (VSHSP). This is a continuation of previous funding, effectively doubling the College's contribution. The VSHSP, independently run by the Veterinary Benevolent Fund, offers a confidential service that aims to combat problems with alcohol, drugs, eating disorders and other addictive and mental health issues.

The funding will be reviewed annually as part of the RCVS budgeting process.

"Mental Health is a significant issue for the veterinary profession. Most of us have experience of colleagues or ourselves having problems," says Neil Smith, RCVS Vice-President and Chair of Mind Matters. "Mind Matters is a pan-profession project, and I am very pleased that there is active engagement from across the various veterinary associations and stakeholders."

"Mind Matters seeks to increase the accessibility and acceptance of support, encouraging a culture that is better equipped to talk and deal with stress and related mental health issues, and, ultimately, by helping to reduce such triggers within the profession," adds Neil.

The first Mind Matters action was to provide funding to ensure that callers to Vet Helpline, a



mind matters

completely confidential support service which is part of the Veterinary Benevolent Fund and run by volunteers, are put directly through to a person, rather than having to leave a message.

The new Vet Helpline system has been in place since mid-December and operates on a new number: **0303 040 2551**. There is also a confidential email service, accessible via www.vetlife.org.uk.

Mind Matters will include five streams of activity:

- Learning and understanding best practice – research within the veterinary profession, for example, into occupational stress factors; and among other related professions and private and public sector organisations that have successfully tackled similar issues
- Changing the culture – a programme of communications activities to help generate a positive environment for discussion, reduce stigma, increase awareness and the ability to identify risks, and encourage help-seeking behaviour
- Intervention: personal level – financial and other support for existing services, such as Vet Helpline and Veterinary Surgeons' Health

Support Programme, together with an investigation into what more may be required to support those in need

- Intervention: supporting the supporters – training and guidance for those who may be working or living with someone who needs assistance, in order to help supporters spot and understand signs of stress and mental illness, and help the person seek expert help
- Making changes – working closely with the joint RCVS/British Veterinary Association Vet Futures project (www.vetfutures.org.uk) to help identify aspects of how the profession is structured and run (from student to retirement) that exacerbate stress and mental health problems – and consider how they may be addressed

Current actions underway include the development of an interprofessional symposium considering best practice in tackling mental health problems in the veterinary and other professions; the commissioning of a drama to raise awareness of the issues; the development of a tailored course to assist vets and VNs in spotting the signs of mental ill-health in colleagues and being confident to signpost sources of help; and, the provision of materials to flag up these sources of help, such as the Vet Helpline sticker enclosed with this issue of *RCVS News* – please do affix it somewhere in your practice, for example, on the controlled drugs cabinet.

Mind Matters is supported by a taskforce, comprising the Veterinary Benevolent Fund, the British Veterinary Association, the British Veterinary Nursing Association, the Veterinary Practice Management Association, the Veterinary Schools Council, the Veterinary Defence Society, the Society of Practising Veterinary Surgeons and the Association of Veterinary Students.

A befitting award

Queen's Medal awarded to Lord Soulsby

This year we have awarded our prestigious Queen's Medal to Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior, the first veterinary surgeon to be made a Life Peer of the House of Lords.

Lord Soulsby, a past President of both the RCVS and the Royal Society of Medicine who received his peerage in 1990, was nominated by fellow member of the House, Professor the Lord Trees in recognition of a "truly exceptional" veterinary career which was "in several respects unique in its achievements".

Lord Trees cited achievements such as Lord Soulsby's tenure as head of the Department of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Cambridge, his numerous publications and

research papers and his involvement with animal welfare and veterinary research committees and advisory bodies, including the Companion Animal Welfare Council and the Animal Procedures Committee of the Home Office.

Lord Trees added: "His publications, research, international awards, fellowships, visiting professorships and prizes all testify to his global impact and reputation. Before One Health became trendy, he had a major role in bridging the veterinary and medical worlds through his role in the Royal Society of Medicine and the Academy of Medical Sciences."

The Queen's Medal was launched in 2013, with the approval of Her Majesty the Queen as our



Patron, and it is now the highest award that we can bestow upon a veterinary surgeon in recognition of a particularly outstanding contribution to the profession.

Lord Soulsby will receive the award at RCVS Day – our Annual General Meeting and Awards Day – on Friday, 10 July 2015.

Historic Council meeting ahead

First meeting outside London

For the first time since at least the Second World War, RCVS Council will meet outside London this summer. The June meeting will take place at the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh, and will be held in public, as usual.

The meeting itself will take place at 10.30am on Friday 5 June, meanwhile, on Thursday 4 June, the Operational Board will host an afternoon meeting with Scottish stakeholders. There will also be the opportunity for Council members to visit Edinburgh and Glasgow veterinary schools and local practices.

"Promoting our desire to be a first rate regulator means getting closer to our membership and I am delighted that Council will be convened outside London," says President Stuart Reid.

"Our meetings are public events and it is important that we do everything we can to engage throughout the country; this will be an excellent opportunity to provide access for those who are not able to make it to Belgravia House.

"I sincerely hope that this will be the first of many and that we can make the most of gathering views and opinions from the locales we visit. On this occasion, rather than travelling to London, Councillors will be travelling to Scotland."

Directly before the Council meeting (8-10am) there will be a breakfast meeting where local vets and VNs will be invited to contribute their ideas to the Vet Futures project – for more details, please see the enclosed leaflet or www.vetfutures.org.uk/events.

If you would like to attend the Council meeting, please advise Dawn Wiggins on d.wiggins@rcvs.org.uk, by May 27, as space is limited.



Looking to the future

Post-Council update

Nick Stace, Chief Executive

Spring is a time for new beginnings and looking forward, so I was delighted to announce at our March Council meeting that we have made such good progress on our strategic objectives that it is now time to start the process of looking forward to the next three-year plan.

Many of the reforms I wished to make when I joined the College have now been achieved and are bedding in – such as the streamlined process for handling concerns; the introduction of a more customer-focused culture, with a service charter; and the modernisation of our registration regulations which, among other more esoteric changes, mean that members can now pay their fees by either credit or debit card without incurring additional fees.

In addition, the first ever List of Advanced Practitioners has been launched – a move that has garnered some interest from the profession overseas. We are also now about a third of the way through our trial for the alternative dispute resolution service – albeit that we needed to extend the timeframe to ensure we had enough cases to make a significant appraisal of success. A further trial of extended hours for our Advice Line will start in the early summer.

Meanwhile, many other projects remain underway and are on course for delivery, such as the review of the Practice Standards Scheme, and the ongoing transformation of our IT system. In fact, I was delighted that the Chair of our Audit and Risk Committee, Liz Butler, reported to Council that her Committee had found all of our ongoing IT projects to be complying with the new protocols on project management.

All these things mean we are now well on our way to becoming a first-rate regulator. And, of course, our brand new Charter gives us a firm foundation on which we can continue to develop and improve what we do. The healthy discussions we had around governance reform at the March meeting of Council indicate that although we have not precisely agreed the model, we do agree that reform is required so that Council is fit for purpose.

Future scoping

So, while we still have a good way to go in meeting our 2014-2016 Strategic Plan objectives, it's also now time to look ahead. It's fitting, then, that we are currently working closely with the British Veterinary Association (BVA) on the Vet Futures project, which aims to help the profession prepare for, and shape, its own future.

As Gandhi said, "The future depends on what you do today". We can't afford to wait around for events to unfold, instead, the Vet Futures project shows ourselves and the BVA demonstrating real leadership. The project is currently in the phase of gathering information and views around the key trends and issues likely to affect the veterinary team by 2030 – see the article on page 3 for more details of what's been done so far and how you can get involved.

We hope to be in a position to review an initial draft report from the project in early autumn, and thereafter roll out actions not only for the RCVS and the BVA, but for other organisations and individuals within the profession.

Our new Mind Matters Initiative is also firmly looking to the future – a future where the statistics around mental ill-health and stress within the veterinary team make less upsetting reading. We have committed significant resources to this project, over a five-year period, which indicates the seriousness of our intent. We aim to raise awareness of the issues, reduce the stigma surrounding mental ill-health, improve assistance available to those in need and, ultimately, mitigate the factors that play a part in causing the problems in the first place. Mental health is a complex and multifactorial field and we clearly won't be able to solve all of the problems, but we hope to make a significant contribution.

Watch my post-Council videos at www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos, read my blog at www.nickstaceblogs.org, or follow me on [@nickstacetweets](https://twitter.com/nickstacetweets).

Paying cards

Debit cards now accepted

This year, for the first time, we are accepting debit card payments from veterinary surgeons who are renewing their registration.

The annual renewal fee for veterinary surgeons should be paid by 31 March. Those who have not paid by 30 April will be charged an extra £35 to renew their registration while those who have not paid by 31 May will be removed from the Register.

Corrie McCann, our Director of Operations, said: "Following feedback from the profession, this year, thanks to a change in our registration regulations, we are able to accept debit card payments which we hope will make the renewal process much easier and more convenient for our members. Furthermore, members will also no longer be charged if they choose to pay their fee by credit card."

Vets will also need to confirm their registration details (including their correspondence and registration addresses), confirm that they have met the RCVS requirement for continuing professional development of 105 hours over a three-year period and disclose any new or previously undisclosed convictions, cautions or adverse findings. Further details of our protocol on handling convictions declared by a vet can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/convictions.

"Members will also no longer be charged if they choose to pay their fee by credit card."

New registration regulations mean that veterinary surgeons now have the choice of either home or work as their registered address – previously only work addresses were allowed.

The annual renewal can be completed by returning the form that has been sent by post or by logging into the 'My Account' area of our website (www.rcvs.org.uk/login) using the security details that have been sent to all vets.

If you have not received your annual renewal form or security details for the 'My Account' area, please contact our Registration Department on 020 7202 0707 or registration@rcvs.org.uk as soon as possible.

If you have queries about paying the annual renewal fee, please contact our Finance Team on 020 7202 0733 or finance@rcvs.org.uk.



Running for office

Stuart Reid runs marathon for mental health

President Stuart Reid is running the Virgin Money London Marathon on 26 April, in aid of the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) Animal Care Trust, the Veterinary Benevolent Fund (VBF) and Mind.

The RVC Animal Care Trust will use the funds to assist the student bodies at all of the UK veterinary schools; the VBF, through Vetlife, the Vet Helpline and the Veterinary Surgeons' Health Support Programme, offers specific assistance to members of the veterinary team; and Mind has been working with the profession and the veterinary schools at all levels in developing approaches to mental health and wellbeing.

"As President of the RCVS and Principal of the RVC I feel that I am in a privileged position and I would like to take every opportunity to help break down the stigma associated with mental health and wellbeing, and to raise what I can to assist these three excellent charities in dealing with what is, sadly, a major issue for us," says Stuart.

"Most of all, I am doing it for the nine people I know personally who are no longer with us, and the many more who have found, and will find, help in time," he adds.

To help Stuart meet his sponsorship target of £10,000, please support him via uk.virginmoneygiving.com/StuartReid.



More time for ADR trial

Trial extended until October and remit broadened

Our trial to develop an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) system has been extended until October 2015 and has broadened its remit to allow more cases to be considered.

The trial, which was originally due to end in May 2015, aims to gather evidence needed to develop a permanent scheme. This would provide an alternative form of resolution for the many concerns raised with us that do not meet our threshold for serious professional misconduct and are, therefore, not taken through our disciplinary process.

As well as the timeframe being extended, the trial will now also be widened to include concerns raised about the treatment of horses and other equines, in addition to those raised about small animals.

Furthermore, we have also lowered the maximum financial award that can be recommended by the Ombudsman Services (a not-for-profit complaints resolution service which is administering the trial)

to £3,000 for small animal cases. The maximum financial award that can be recommended by the Ombudsman Services in relation to equine cases remains at £10,000.

Nick Stace, Chief Executive, says: "The trial got off to a slower start than we expected and so we have decided to extend its length and breadth to allow more time and scope to gather the evidence and testimonies which we need to assess it."

"It's important to stress again that the trial is free, voluntary – as both parties must agree to take part – and that the recommendations made by the Ombudsman Services are not binding – it is up to either party as to whether they accept them."

The results of the trial, will now be reported to the November 2015 meeting of RCVS Council. For a report of the first ADR Advisory Panel meeting and an anonymised case study of one of the cases that has been dealt with, please see page 18.

For further information about the ADR trial, please visit www.rcvs.org.uk/adr.

Governance review gains momentum

Council agrees panel to develop plans

At its March meeting Council agreed that a panel, comprising Council members Professor Stephen May, Richard Stephenson, Andrea Jeffery and a lay member, should help to develop a consultation document for governance reform, working with the Operational Board.

The objective is to develop a Council structure which is fit for purpose, by being more streamlined, agile and responsive, and with a composition that better reflects both those who are regulated and those on whose behalf this is done. The current Council of 42 is only set to increase in number, as more vet schools come on stream, and, at approximately £25,000 per meeting, is not a cost-effective decision-making structure.

Two options were put before Council for discussion – with the proviso from CEO Nick Stace that “every model has its faults”.

The first was for a smaller Council – made up of 20 members, rather than the current 42 – which would meet six times a year and comprise 12 vets, two RVNs, one vet school appointee and five lay members. The Council would be chaired by the President, with the CEO and Registrar in attendance; the Operational Board would be disbanded.

The second option was for a yet smaller Council – of 11 – to remain responsible for decision making and again to meet more frequently. This would be backed by a ‘caucus’ of up to 50 individuals that would meet twice a year to act as an advisory group, and also as a pool from which Council and committee members would be drawn.

Other issues discussed included whether the term for the President should be increased from one to three years, the term of Council members should be reduced from four years to three and Council

members should only be allowed to sit for a maximum of three terms. The role of the Chief Veterinary Officer on Council was also discussed.

Council members’ views on the precise direction of travel, and the speed at which change should happen, were not unanimous, but there was a strong feeling that maintaining the status quo was no longer an option. While the need for a robust evidence base for change was called for, there was a sense that momentum already achieved should be maintained.

Nick Stace highlighted that discussions were ongoing with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for a legislative reform order (LRO) to make these changes, and that support had been given to the development of proposals for reform. “It will be important to ensure that the proposals are flexible enough to allow us not to need a fresh LRO or Act in the future. We need to allow future generations to evolve our governance without having to go through the process we are going through today,” he said.

President Stuart Reid said: “Recognising the complexity of our role as a regulator and as a Royal College, the contribution from Council today was enormously helpful in maintaining our momentum towards refined governance structures. With the endorsement of Council, the next few months will be critically important in drafting workable options to take to the profession and the public.”

The panel will report to Council in June, with Defra likely to consult with the profession and the public thereafter.

The full recommendations can be read as part of the Council paper bundle, at www.rcvs.org.uk/about-us/rcvs-council/council-meetings/5-march-2015.

VMD shares enforcement success

Sign up to VMD e-news

The Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) has started to publish information about its enforcement work in a regular e-newsletter, to which the veterinary team can subscribe.

The VMD Enforcement team’s focus is twofold: tackling the illegal importation, marketing, sale, possession and administration of illegal medicines, and preventing the illegal marketing of non-medical products. To do this effectively, the VMD relies on information from vets and others so it can act.

“As well as highlighting our work in removing illegal medicines from the market, the newsletter will introduce the VMD’s enforcement team and encourage vets to continue to report any information they have about illegal medicines,” says VMD Quality and Communications Manager, Matthew Isted.

The newsletter shows the range of actions the VMD has taken in 2014/15. For example, so far in the current financial year, over 500 internet listings for illegal products have been removed.

You can subscribe by emailing enforcement@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk.

Revised timetable for compulsory microchipping

Welsh timetable change

The Welsh Government has revised the date whereby all dogs should be microchipped from 1 March 2015 to the spring of 2016, in line with the date announced for the compulsory microchipping of dogs in England.

The announcement was made by Rebecca Evans, Deputy Minister for Farming and Food in Wales, who also announced that there would now be a further round of consultation to clarify issues around enforcement, restrictions on who may undertake the implantation of microchips and how the information about microchip implantation should be recorded.

The Deputy Minister also said that the Welsh Government would be working to harmonise its standards with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Microchipping Regulations for England.

- As we go to press, we hear Scotland is also introducing compulsory microchipping in April 2016.

Changing Chairs

New statutory committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs

New Chairs and Vice-Chairs have been appointed to our two statutory committees – the Disciplinary Committee and Preliminary Investigation Committee – by a Selection Panel comprising the President, Vice-Presidents, current Chairs of each committee and an independent lawyer with regulatory experience.

From 1 July 2015, the Chair of the Disciplinary Committee will be Dr Ian Green, with Professor Alistair Barr and Chitra Karve as the veterinary and lay Vice-Chairs respectively.

From the same date Andrew Ash will be chairing the Preliminary Investigation Committee, with Harvey Locke as his Vice-Chair.

Meanwhile two lay members of the Preliminary Investigation Committee – Sarah Pond and Elana Tessler – have stepped down, and been replaced by John Anderson and Dr Stuart Hill.

None of the appointees are members of RCVS Council as, following the introduction of the legislative reform order in 2013, as of the beginning of July the statutory committees must be constituted separately from Council.

Education and Standards

In other news, Professor Jo Price has been elected as Chair of Education Committee, effective at RCVS Day, taking the place that will be vacated by Chris Tufnell when he becomes Vice-President. David Catlow will continue as Chair of Standards.

A full house

Celebration to welcome new Charter

Earlier this month, we hosted a reception in the Members' Dining Room of the House of Commons to celebrate our new Royal Charter with over 200 guests in attendance – including vets and veterinary nurses, Members of Parliament and Peers, RCVS Council members past and present, College staff and members of the press.

The event was sponsored by MPs from across the three main national parties: Neil Parish (Conservative), Angela Smith (Labour) and David Heath (Liberal Democrat). Neil Parish opened the event by congratulating the College on its new Charter, the first for almost 50 years.

“It is simply unacceptable that unqualified individuals should be able to use the same title as a well-qualified, properly regulated professional.”

RCVS President Professor Stuart Reid then explained the historical significance of the Charter, in particular its role in formally underpinning the regulation of registered veterinary nurses (RVNs) and empowering VN Council to set standards for training and continued professional development.

He added: “However, there is one more piece of this jigsaw that is missing. We would like to increase further the confidence of the public in veterinary nurses with formal statutory protection of the title veterinary nurse. It is simply unacceptable that unqualified individuals should be able to use the same title as a well-qualified, properly regulated professional.”

He added that this situation was potentially misleading to the public and could endanger



animal welfare. Furthermore, he stated that veterinary nurses should no longer be referred to as ‘paraprofessionals’ but as ‘allied professionals’ instead, in recognition of the vital role they play in veterinary practice.

His words were echoed by Kathy Kissick, Chair of VN Council, who commended the hard work that it had taken to achieve the Charter, saying: “I am so very proud to stand here as a registered veterinary nurse and an associate of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.”

Nick Stace, CEO, closed the speeches by outlining the great progress made by the College in its mission to become a first-rate regulator. He cited not only the new Charter but a number of other initiatives, including the introduction of a new streamlined process for handling concerns, the ongoing alternative dispute resolution (ADR) trial and the Mind Matters Initiative, all of which were making positive contributions to the welfare of the profession, animals and the public. To underline the point, he introduced our new video – see page 18.

Nick added that the College would not be resting on its laurels and that we were undertaking the Vet Futures project, in conjunction with the BVA, to understand how we could better serve the profession and public in the future.

Recognising excellence in veterinary nursing

VN Golden Jubilee Award 2015

We are now accepting nominations for the VN Golden Jubilee Award 2015, which recognises exceptional contributions to veterinary nursing.

The Award was launched in 2011 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of our first veterinary nursing training course and recognises those who have made an outstanding contribution to the profession, animal welfare and/or patient care. Nominees can be registered veterinary nurses, veterinary surgeons or lay people.

Nomination forms need to be submitted by 5pm on **Friday 24 April**. The principal nominator must be a registered veterinary nurse or veterinary surgeon, although the two supporting proposers can be lay people.

Kathy Kissick, Chair of VN Council, said: “One of the main priorities of VN Council in the coming years is to raise levels of awareness of registered veterinary nurses, and awards which recognise the importance of VNs in the context of the veterinary team and animal welfare are crucial to enhancing the profession's profile.

“Therefore I would encourage veterinary nurses and veterinary surgeons to think about those VNs who go above and beyond the call of duty for their cause and who would be excellent ambassadors for the profession and nominate them for the Golden Jubilee Award.”

Last year's winner was Hayley Walters who was recognised for her contribution to animal welfare through her teaching, clinical and international outreach work. Previous recipients were Jean Turner in 2011 and Sue Badger in 2012. No award was made in 2013.

The winner will be chosen by a panel of VN Council members and will receive the award at RCVS Day – the College's Annual General Meeting and Awards Day – on Friday 10 July 2015.

The nomination form for the VN Golden Jubilee Award can be downloaded from www.rcvs.org.uk/goldenjubilee. For further information about making a nomination, please contact Annette Amato, Deputy Head of Veterinary Nursing, on a.amato@rcvs.org.uk or 020 7202 0713.

Your turn as an intern

Parliamentary position available

Veterinary graduates or undergraduates with an interest in veterinary politics and policy are being encouraged to apply for the position of Parliamentary Veterinary Intern at the office of Professor the Lord Trees.

Successful candidates for the role will provide administrative, policy and research support to Lord Trees, a former President of the RCVS and one of two veterinary surgeons in the House of Lords, for a period of one year, with the possibility of extending the tenure for a further year by mutual agreement.

The intern will be employed by the Veterinary Policy Research Foundation, a not-for-profit company set up to fund and support the internship, and will perform a variety of tasks including the preparation of briefing papers, speeches, questions in the House and presentations.

The position is open to veterinary graduates who are members of the College, as well as to veterinary undergraduates at any UK veterinary school who have completed the third year of their course.

Full details of the role, including the salary and job specification, can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/parliamentaryintern. The deadline for applications is **Monday, 27 April 2015**.

Final consultation on revised PSS

Feedback sought on Awards proposals and new guidance

In early February, we launched a final consultation in our latest comprehensive review of the Practice Standards Scheme (PSS), and are still seeking feedback on the proposed detail of the revised Scheme, in particular, the new system of Awards for RCVS-accredited practices.

Following our commitment to review the PSS every five years, this is the second such review since the voluntary practice accreditation system was launched in 2005. After gaining extensive feedback from PSS members and the wider profession through previous consultations and focus groups, and the collaborative approach taken by members of the Practice Standards Group, there have been a number of significant redevelopments to the Scheme, which are due to be rolled out later this year.

The revised Scheme will no longer just consider facilities and equipment at a particular site, but will focus on all areas of the practice, emphasising the outcomes and behaviours that impact on the veterinary care of animals. Whilst the existing accreditation categories of Core Standards, General Practice and Veterinary Hospital will remain, the revised Scheme will provide a pathway for practices to improve and more easily demonstrate where they excel.

"One of the most significant additions to the Scheme is that practices will be able to apply to be inspected for additional Awards in specific areas," says Jacqui Molyneux, Chair of the Practice

Standards Group. "If successful, they would then be able to promote themselves as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' in these areas to their clients.

"The main aim of this consultation is to seek feedback on the Awards, and to check we have set the Awards criteria appropriately, so I would urge the profession to have a look at the proposed framework, and to send us their views," she says.

The consultation, which is available at www.rcvs.org.uk/pssconsult2015, also seeks feedback on the guidance that's provided to help practices meet the Scheme requirements, along with a small number of questions about specific areas. The requirements themselves remain largely unchanged, so are not subject to review.

The modules, requirements, guidance and Awards framework for small animal, equine and farm animal practices are detailed in three separate documents that are available to download from the consultation web page. This page also contains further details about the consultation and instructions on how to submit feedback.

The consultation is open until 5pm on Monday, 23 March 2015.

Please remember that all PSS fees are due by 1 April 2015, in order to avoid potential loss of accreditation status. If you have any questions about your fee invoice or payment, please contact us on 020 7202 0796 or pss@rcvs.org.uk.

Approving additional qualifications

How to add approved qualifications to your Register entry

We have recently published a form to allow veterinary surgeons to apply to have a qualification added to their entry in the RCVS Register.

To be eligible for inclusion on the Register, the qualification needs to meet a number of criteria which are listed on our website (www.rcvs.org.uk/approvedqualifications) and categorised as follows:

- Veterinary qualifications
- Qualifications related to veterinary and biomedical sciences, agriculture and medicine
- Postnominals awarded for eminence and significant contributions to a field related to veterinary science

There are also a small number of non-veterinary, science, medicine or agriculture related qualifications.

If the qualification you want to add to your entry is already included on the list, please contact the Registration Department and send a copy of the diploma or certificate (for details see www.rcvs.org.uk/vetregisteramendments).

Primary veterinary qualifications and qualifications that are approved for Advanced Practitioner and/or Specialist status will be added to the list automatically and therefore no application is necessary.

To add qualifications that are not already on the approved list, an application must be made by the individual holding the qualification(s), using the new form (available from www.rcvs.org.uk/qualificationsform) – third-party applications will not be accepted. The form requires information to be provided about the qualification, including its level, awarding body and content.

Applications to add qualifications to the approved list will be considered by members of our Education Committee.

For further information about making an application to have a qualification or postnominal added to the approved list, please contact our Education Department on 020 7202 0791 or education@rcvs.org.uk.

RVPP fees due

End of month deadline

Practices on the Register of Veterinary Practice Premises (RVPP) are reminded that their annual registration fee is due by 1 April 2015.

We hold this Register on behalf of the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD), helping them to fulfil their obligations under European law to maintain and improve the traceability of, and accountability for, veterinary medicines.

Practice premises must be registered in order for veterinary surgeons to supply medicines from them, and registered premises are regularly inspected by the VMD or, for RCVS-accredited practices, by Practice Standard Inspectors.

If you have not received your RVPP renewal letter, or have any further queries about paying the fee, please contact our Registration Department on 020 7202 0707. Please note that for RCVS-accredited practices the RVPP fee is incorporated into the annual Practice Standards Scheme fee.

If you would like to register new premises, you can download an RVPP form from www.rcvs.org.uk/rvpp, where you can also find details of the type of premises that require registration.

Do It Yourself

No third-party registrants please

We would like to remind both veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses that any requests to change details held on the Register of Veterinary Surgeons and Register of Veterinary Nurses – for example, address, marital status, new qualifications and confirmation that CPD requirements have been met – must come from the individual concerned.

Practices can still make changes to staff lists and update the practice details for our online Find a Vet service, but these won't be reflected in the registration records of veterinary surgeons and veterinary nurses.

Around annual renewal time we often receive 'bulk' requests to change details from practices where it is clear that many annual renewal forms have been filled out by the same person. However, as a regulated profession this information must come from the individual member(s) in question.

For further advice about changing your details, please feel free to contact our Registration Team on 020 7202 0707 or registration@rcvs.org.uk

To change staff or practice details on our Find a Vet search tool please email findavet@rcvs.org.uk. When changing staff details, please make sure to include their registration number and any other relevant details.

Advertising and publicity: what's new?

Updated guidance now available

We receive a regular stream of enquiries about the standards expected of the profession when advertising and promoting their services. More often than not, these types of enquiries come from vets and veterinary nurses (VNs) who are questioning whether adverts issued by their competitors are appropriate and professional. With this in mind, the Standards Committee recently approved a number of updates to the existing guidance on advertising and publicity. The review was part of our ongoing commitment to ensure that advice remains relevant, up to date and sufficient to answer the profession's questions on key issues.

The revised guidance does not seek to restrict a vet or VN's freedom to advertise their business or services. However, as professionals, there are standards expected of vets and VNs over and above many other business owners. The guidance covers key areas such as the substance and form of any advertisement or publicity, rules around data protection and compliance with UK advertising codes of practice.

In short, the guidance reminds vets and VNs that:

- advertising and publicity should be professional,

accurate and truthful. It should not be of a character likely to bring the profession into disrepute, for example, an unsolicited approach by visit or phone (although a phone call to a business may not be considered unprofessional);

- advertising and publicity should not be misleading or exploit an animal owner's lack of veterinary knowledge;
- in commenting to the media, they should ensure they distinguish between personal opinion, political belief and established facts, and they should declare any relevant conflicts of interest;
- they should be careful not to express, or imply, that their views are shared by other vets or VNs or a professional organisation to which vets or VNs belong, unless previously authorised, for example, by the RCVS, British Veterinary Association, British Veterinary Nursing Association or other professional body; and,
- there are legal restrictions on advertising medicines and publishing medicine prices, which are set out in the Veterinary Medicines Regulations and associated guidance. See in particular the Veterinary Medicines Directorate's Guidance Note 4 – Controls on Advertising

(www.vmd.defra.gov.uk/pdf/vmgn/VMGNote04.pdf)

We are often asked whether it is acceptable for practices to make a generic comparison with local competitors. All publicity should comply with the UK Code of Non-broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing (CAP Code) which is enforced by the Advertising Standards Authority, see www.cap.org.uk/Advertising-Codes/Non-Broadcast.aspx. Vets and VNs planning to conduct a direct marketing campaign should comply with all relevant data protection legislation. Advice and guidance can be sought from the Information Commissioner's Office (<http://ico.org.uk/>) and there is useful information on database practice at section 10 of the CAP Code.

Vets and VNs planning to produce adverts or publicity that make claims of superiority or other comparisons with competitors should have particular regard to section 3 of the CAP Code, so as to ensure they do not mislead the public or be accused of so doing. Concerns about particular advertisements and publicity should generally be raised with the Advertising Standards Authority in the first instance.

No dopes here

BHA publishes new drugs rules

The British Horseracing Authority (BHA) has instituted a new set of rules which take a zero-tolerance approach to the use and administering of anabolic steroids in horseracing.

The BHA's Equine Anti-Doping Rules were published in February and were implemented on 2 March 2015. Among the new rules are a complete ban on administering anabolic steroids to racehorses at any point in their life; that any horse administered with an anabolic steroid will face a mandatory stand-down period from both training and racing; and, that all racehorses must be available for testing at any time, regardless of location and whose care the horse is under, from the time it is registered.

The new rules can be read in full at www.britishhorseracing.com/resource-centre/anti-doping-medication-control/equine-anti-doping-rules-and-guidance.



Equality street

New references to equality in the supporting guidance

The Codes of Professional Conduct (6.4) require vets and veterinary nurses to comply with legislation relevant to the provision of veterinary services. Although it is impossible for us to list every piece of legislation applicable across the UK, the supporting guidance does include various references to the most relevant regulations in core areas such as animal welfare, animals in science, veterinary medicines and fair trading.

The professional obligation to comply with relevant legislation includes, by implication, the Equality Act 2010. This is the most significant piece of equality legislation for many years. It simplifies, streamlines and strengthens the law, incorporating nine pieces of primary legislation and over 100 pieces of secondary legislation. It gives individuals greater protection from unfair discrimination and makes it easier for employers and companies to understand their responsibilities. It also sets a new standard for those who provide public services to legal protection from discrimination related to 'protected characteristics' such as age, disability, race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion, sex and sexual orientation.

The provisions of this Act are significant and far reaching, and are now a key feature of everyday

life for individuals, service users and businesses, including veterinary practices. As such, we have decided to further highlight the importance of these legislative provisions at relevant points in our supporting guidance, including:

- **Chapter 5 Communication between professional colleagues** – vets and veterinary nurses should not speak or write disparagingly about another veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse. Colleagues should be treated fairly, without discrimination and with respect, in all situations and in all forms of communication.
- **Chapter 11 Communication and consent** – the provision of veterinary services creates a contractual relationship under which the veterinary surgeon and/or veterinary nurse should treat clients fairly and without discrimination.
- **Chapter 17 Veterinary team and business** – vets and veterinary nurses should be aware of, and adhere to, all of their responsibilities as set out in the relevant equalities legislation and should take steps to challenge unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation where it arises.

For further information on UK equality legislation, please see www.equalityhumanrights.com.

Cytotoxic drugs: encouraging safe practice

Notes from Standards Chair

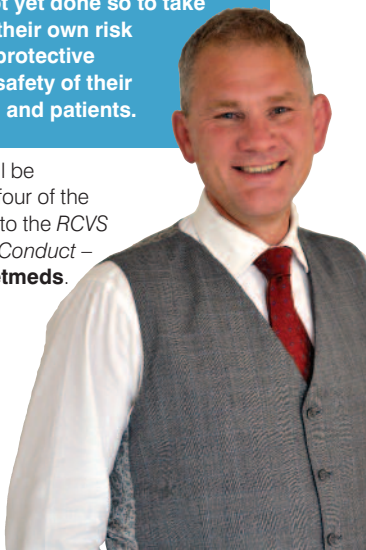
Following a recent case involving a Health and Safety Executive prosecution of a veterinary practice for breaches of legislation regarding the safe use of cytotoxic drugs, the RCVS Standards Committee has issued new supporting guidance to highlight to the profession their legal obligations, and raise awareness of the risks and precautions that should be considered when handling these drugs, as explained by Standards Committee Chair David Catlow (pictured).

Use of cytotoxic drugs is a high-risk activity and must be undertaken competently, with full appreciation of the potential hazards the drugs pose. There have been no recent changes in the relevant health and safety legislation but we were aware that last year's case will have brought the issue into focus, raising questions and encouraging evaluation. It was therefore the right time for us to consider what the RCVS can offer the profession in terms of guidance.

With assistance from the Health and Safety Executive and veterinary surgeons associated with the College, we have compiled some general guidance that highlights the need for a risk assessment and measures designed to protect the health and safety of staff and others who may be affected by the use of cytotoxic drugs.

The guidance also recommends periodic testing and monitoring of protective measures, if appropriate and available, and regular review of risk assessments. We have not set out to produce a detailed 'how to' manual – this is best reserved to those more qualified. We hope, however, that by raising awareness of the fundamental principles of the safe use of cytotoxic drugs, and by signposting the profession to sources of information, we will encourage those who have not yet done so to take the time to review their own risk assessments and protective measures, for the safety of their employees, clients and patients.

The new guidance will be published in chapter four of the supporting guidance to the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct – www.rcvs.org.uk/vetmeds.



How can we best protect whistleblowers?

Jackie Smith, CEO and Registrar, Nursing and Midwifery Council

The issue of health professionals feeling they are able to 'blow the whistle' where they see poor quality care or when a colleague's behaviour has fallen short of professional standards has never been more important. In light of the inquiries by Sir Robert Francis QC into both the Stafford Hospital scandal and creating an open and honest reporting culture in the NHS, health regulators have had to take stock of how to improve the way they deal with concerns raised by professionals and the public alike.

In this guest column Jackie Smith, the CEO and Registrar for the Nursing and Midwifery Council, talks about how the regulator has taken on board lessons and is doing more to listen to and support members who raise concerns.

The NMC welcomed Robert Francis's *Freedom to Speak Up* review into whistleblowing in the NHS. As the regulator of nurses and midwives in the UK, we want a health and care sector where these professionals have the freedom to uphold our standards and practise to the best of their ability. If a nurse or midwife has concerns about issues in their workplace that could put patients' safety at risk, it is vital that they feel able to raise these with their employers. We are reviewing our policies and procedures to make sure that people who speak out against a fellow nurse or midwife receive the help and support they need.

Our revised *Code of Professional Standards*, which becomes effective on 31 March, makes clear that nurses and midwives have a duty to raise concerns. To make sure they are practising in line with our standards, they should bring any issues about patient or public safety, or the level of care people are receiving in their workplace, to the attention of their employer at the first reasonable opportunity. Senior nurses and midwives are required to protect those they line manage from any harm or victimisation after a concern is raised. It is important that nurses and midwives, whatever their employment setting, scope of practice or level of seniority, are supported in bringing issues to an employer's attention. There should be open and transparent processes in place for raising concerns. Staff should be made aware of these and know how to access them. Employers have a part to play in making sure their working cultures enable nurses and midwives to raise concerns without fear of disciplinary action or unfair treatment.

Robert Francis's review includes measures for vulnerable groups, who may experience more anxiety when raising concerns than others due to the nature of their term of employment. Among these groups are students, who undertake practice placements in healthcare settings but are not fully integrated members of staff. Their need to pass each placement can constrain them from raising concerns freely. We have published guidance on best-practice approaches to raising concerns, and the principles in this guidance also apply to students. We recommend that they talk to staff at their education institution or a union representative if they require further support. The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 is being changed to define students as 'workers' and give them the same legal rights as employed staff. This is an important change that will allow students to raise concerns with greater legal protection.

Raising concerns is a complex matter, and our guidance, *Raising and Escalating Concerns*, addresses issues such as the difference between raising concerns and making a complaint, respecting individuals' right to confidentiality, and where to go for help or advice. We take raising concerns extremely seriously, and are committed to ensuring that our regulatory functions reflect the findings and recommendations of the Francis review.

If you are a veterinary surgeon or veterinary nurse who is concerned about inappropriate conduct in the workplace which you feel breaches the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct, please contact our Professional Conduct Department on 020 7202 0727. The RCVS supporting guidance on whistle-blowing can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/whistleblowing.

Why I applied to become an Advanced Practitioner

Two vets talk about their motivation and ambitions

With well over 500 veterinary surgeons successfully applying to become Advanced Practitioners (see page 2) the new status has exceeded our expectations in terms of its popularity and take-up. No doubt the motivations behind applying for the status are as diverse as the designations and here we talk to two successful applicants about why they applied and how they hope the designation will change their professional life.



Michael Woodhouse, Bainbridge Vets, North Yorkshire

"When I heard the RCVS was bringing in the concept of Advanced Practitioner status I was interested. There had always been a big step from 'just a vet' to Specialist with nothing in between for certificate holders and those with further qualifications. I found it heartening that the RCVS is now recognising those who have spent the time (and the money) studying for further qualifications – the so-called 'middle tier' towards specialisation.

"I found it heartening that the RCVS is now recognising those who have spent the time (and the money) studying for further qualifications – the so-called 'middle tier' towards specialisation."

"I wanted to apply for the Advanced Practitioner status because I think it clarifies to our clients what the further qualifications and letters after our name actually mean to them! Whilst a certificate is recognisable to professional colleagues in its own right, the new status gives extra credibility that the

individual is keeping up to date with CPD in their designated area.

"I am now an RCVS Advanced Practitioner in Cattle Health and Production, which fits well with my clinical work as this is mainly with dairy cows. All areas of veterinary practice have become more competitive, along with clients' rising expectations and greater knowledge and access to information. I hope that holding the status communicates to my clients that I am serious about what I do, and that I am practising at a more advanced level.

"The RCVS has received some criticism with the requirement to demonstrate some of the soft skills for people applying for and maintaining the status. Having done the A module for my Certificate in Advanced Veterinary Practice, however, I believe that these areas are vitally important. I like the fact that the status can be taken away if an Advanced Practitioner is not practising with competence in these skills, as well as the added necessity to do more than the minimum requirement for CPD."



Colin Whiting, Director at A30 Referrals, Penmellyn Vet Group, Cornwall

"In truth, at first I thought 'what is this hoop I've got to jump through now!' I wasn't best disposed to RCVS initiatives after there appeared a strong push to remove the certificate postnominals and my initial reaction was cautious to say the least. I am generally averse to paperwork and forms, and I had a degree of suspicion of the motives behind the initiative, as I was previously quite happy with the certificate as my 'badge'. The component regarding the 'A' module in particular left me cold.

"However, there are aspects of the status that I like – the increased requirement for CPD, designated to your area of expertise, has been invigorating. I was up to the required additional levels with CPD

already, but it led me to attend a five-day North American Veterinary Community (NAVC) congress and take on and research a local lecturing commitment. I now have another four days booked in the next couple of months on various courses, one non-clinical.

"In practice, it has led to further mentoring of colleagues, too, something I really enjoy. Altogether, I've felt a re-engagement with CPD as an engaging stimulus rather than a duty; after NAVC I used a little different something I'd learned on each of the first four days back at work. Clinical progression often seems to be many little steps and refinements rather than one big new radical procedure.

"I've felt a re-engagement with CPD as an engaging stimulus rather than a duty; after NAVC I used a little different something I'd learned on each of the first four days back at work."

"I gained the RCVS Certificate in Small Animal Surgery in 2003 and my clinical caseload consists solely of orthopaedic, spinal and soft-tissue surgical cases which are externally or internally referred. I was happy enough with the certificate designation, so I suppose the motivation to become an Advanced Practitioner was more stick than carrot – I wanted to continue to reassure referring vets of my level of competence. I did like the components of the Advanced Practitioner application that asked for case-load and work-balance proportions.

"I chose small animal surgery as it best reflects my work. Originally, I chose surgery because I really enjoyed it. I like the practicality of fixing things and 'sterile carpentry' appeals; I'm too impatient to be content fixing things with a six-week course of tablets or a long-term diet change. I work best at something I am interested in and engaged with – there are a number of pathology and biochemistry lecturers at Liverpool who may still be able to testify to that, through gritted teeth. Things were a little dicey until I reached the clinical years!

"Having engaged a little with the process now, I hope to have a renewed engagement with CPD and clinical progression; I hope that the status is going to be a meaningful and well-recognised level, particularly indicating the proportion of time spent by the individual within a specific area. Ultimately, I feel volume of case experience, as well as level of qualification, are important indicators of proficiency and I hope the status combines those two aspects for the future."

Education Committee roundup

Decisions on accreditation criteria and PDP

Here is a roundup of some of the decisions made at the last meeting of our Education Committee, chaired by Chris Tufnell, in February.

Revised accreditation criteria for vet degrees

The Committee approved recommendations made by the Primary Qualifications Subcommittee (PQSC) for adopting new accreditation standards and a more outcomes-based approach to assessing whether a veterinary degree should receive RCVS accreditation.

The new approach is based on the standards used by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council, adapted to the European and UK context. This was felt to be a better fit for our requirements than the previous European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Educational criteria, on which our old standards were based.

In addition, the Committee approved updates and clarifications for some of the procedures, including the definitions of accreditation status, procedures

for new and overseas degrees, and arrangements for joint visitations. The changes will come into effect immediately and will apply to visits taking place from the beginning of 2016.

“It was noted that the three-year requirement was not a ‘deadline date’ and also that most graduates completed the PDP within 18 months.”

Extension to PDP

The Education Committee decided to introduce a requirement for new graduates in clinical practice to complete the Professional Development Phase (PDP) within three years, with appropriate flexibility for those who may not be able to complete within this time period for valid reasons. This brings us in line with the *Code of Professional Conduct* which states that all those in clinical practice who graduated since 2012 are expected to have completed the PDP.

The Committee agreed that the three-year requirement would only begin when a graduate enters clinical practice, as those working in other areas, such as research, would find it difficult to complete the PDP. It was noted that the three-year requirement was not a ‘deadline date’ and also that most graduates completed the PDP within 18 months.

The Committee discussed how the PDP would apply to overseas graduates but decided that the rules would need clarification and agreed to discuss this at a future meeting.

Updating Year One Competences

The Committee agreed that the Year One Competences for veterinary surgeons – which outline the level of knowledge and skills we expect vets to have achieved after a year in practice – should be updated to bring them into line with recent revisions to the Day One Competences.

A working party is being established to consider changes to the competences with membership to include the current Postgraduate Deans, as well as practitioners.

And the results are in...

Vet and VN CPD audits

Last year we conducted our first ever audit of the amount and type of continuing professional development (CPD) that veterinary surgeons have been engaging in.

Veterinary surgeons are required to complete a minimum of 105 hours of CPD over a three-year period (averaging 35 hours a year) in order to comply with the *Code of Professional Conduct*, which makes it clear that vets have a responsibility to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills. As it is coming up to three years since the revised *Code* was introduced, we decided to measure levels of compliance with CPD.

“Overall, I think they give us a good indication of how the profession is engaging with CPD.”

In total, we contacted 4,885 veterinary surgeons and asked them to submit their CPD records. Of these, 4,401 had not confirmed that they had met our requirement when completing their annual renewal; 400 were a random sample of those who had confirmed they were compliant; 60 were recent graduates who had not responded to frequent reminders about the need to undertake the Professional Development Phase (PDP); and, 24 were both non-compliant and hadn't responded to reminders about the PDP.

Of the 4,885 vets contacted, some 3,975 (or 81%) responded to our request for CPD records. Out of those who responded to our request, some 82% were found to have complied with our requirement between 2011 and 2014.

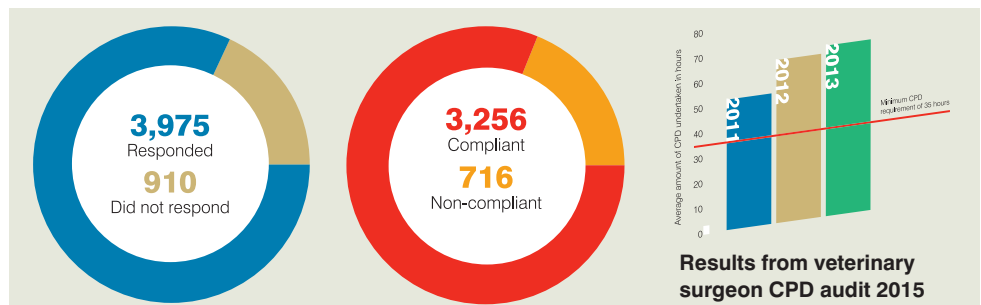
Christine Warman, Head of Education, says: “We are in the process of analysing the results in detail, but, overall, I think they give us a good indication of how the profession is engaging with CPD. Even those people who hadn't confirmed compliance during their annual renewal had, for the most part, done the required amount of CPD.

“If there was one disappointing element to the exercise, it was the fact that a significant minority of veterinary surgeons refused to engage with this process at all – despite the fact that CPD is not only good practice but also a professional responsibility. We will be writing to those vets with

suggestions on how they can meet their CPD obligations. However, if they continue to either not confirm compliance, or not respond to requests for their records, then we may pass their details to the Professional Conduct Department.”

The registered veterinary nurse CPD audit, which is now in its fifth year, asked for the records of some 814 nurses with a response rate of 88%. Three groups were audited: a random sample of those who confirmed compliance; those who had taken part in the 2013 audit but were not compliant; and those who did not respond to the 2013 audit.

Out of those who responded 64% were found to be compliant with our requirement of 45 hours of CPD over a three-year period and the average amount of hours of CPD undertaken over three years was 77 hours.



Recognising international VNs

Rules for accreditation in development

At a meeting of the Veterinary Nurses (VN) Council in February, members agreed in principle that the College could start accrediting non-UK awarding organisations and higher education institutions and their veterinary nursing qualifications. This would mean that, once accredited, students graduating from these institutions would be automatically able to apply to join the Register.

The detail of the accreditation criteria and quality monitoring for non-UK veterinary nursing educational establishments will be discussed at a meeting of the VN Education Subcommittee this month.

VN Council members also decided to formalise the registration rules for veterinary nurses graduating from outside the European Union/ European Economic Area. Under these rules all non-EU/EEA veterinary nurses will have to pass a pre-registration examination before joining the Register.

Furthermore, it was decided that all veterinary nurses trained outside the UK will now be invited to come to the College for their registration, where they will hear from our Veterinary Nursing Team on the responsibilities of VNs as set out in the *Code of Professional Conduct*, and checks will be made on their understanding of it.

Farewell to Freda

Reflecting on 15 years at the RCVS

Next month, we say a sad farewell to our Director of Education, Freda Andrews, who retires after 15 years at the College. Here, she reflects on some of the issues in veterinary education she encountered during this time and some of the Education Department's achievements – including the introduction of Professional Development Phase (PDP) and the accreditation of the University of Nottingham's School of Veterinary Medicine and Science.

What has been your proudest achievement at the RCVS?

So much has happened over the last 15 years, it's hard to pick out one thing. I've tried to make sure we have coherent links between all the different areas of educational work, and establish a logical framework for education to meet the needs of the majority of practising vets.

Before I arrived, it seemed to me that little attention had been given to the development needs of new graduates, and even to the 80% of vets who weren't working towards certificates or diplomas. So I'm proud of having helped to introduce the PDP, and the modular Certificate in Advanced Veterinary

Practice (CertAVP) which is so much more flexible than the old style qualifications. The take-up of the CertAVP has been very pleasing – we currently have 1,541 people enrolled, and 1,131 have achieved the 'A' module since it was introduced.

More recently, the new Advanced Practitioner status provides great recognition for so many vets who are committed to continuing their own professional development. I'm also really proud of the online Professional Development Record, which I developed and project managed through to its launch in 2012.

Has there been a particular highlight of your time at the RCVS?

Watching Nottingham's first cohort of students graduate in 2011 was a real highlight. Visitations to universities are hard work, but they're always intellectually stimulating. It's a real challenge to make sense of all the paperwork and help to steer the visitors towards a consistent and fair evaluation against a complicated set of criteria. Overseeing the process of Nottingham's accreditation covered about eight years of my time at RCVS, and it raised some challenging issues that we needed to work through, so it was great to see it all come to fruition.

How has the veterinary education 'landscape' changed during your time at the RCVS?

All the UK vet schools have changed immensely in my 15 years here – smart new clinical facilities and hospitals, more vertical and horizontal integration across the curriculum, problem-based learning, more emphasis on communication and professional skills, and more training contracted out to off-campus sites and practices. Online libraries and instant access to sophisticated learning resources through tablets and smart phones has completely freed up how students can learn and be assessed. It's hard to believe that the notion of students needing to be taught communication skills was still being challenged back in 2000 – it's now an accepted part of the curriculum.

RCVS has also become more international: we've harmonised the accreditation standards across North America, Europe and Australasia, and we collaborate closely with other veterinary accrediting bodies. Our visitation teams can sometimes look like a meeting of the United Nations. The visit to Glasgow in 2013 had visitors from six countries across four continents! It's really strengthened the whole process.

Where do you see veterinary education heading in the future?

I don't like to make predictions, as they're usually wrong, but I'd like to think that there'll be a focus on more structured CPD in the future, with the emphasis placed on the impact of people's CPD, rather than on counting the number of hours. It would be good to see it become the norm for the majority of vets to be working towards at least one module from the CertAVP every few years, and for most veterinary nurses to work towards advanced qualifications. But given the changes over the last 15 years, who knows what it'll be like in 2030!

What's the best piece of advice you've been given and why?

From an old *Cabinet Office Guide to Minute Taking*: "Refrain from elegant variation and elegant periphrasis". Sound advice for an administrator at the RCVS, I think!





Schedule of visitations home and away

International focus continues

Our focus on accrediting international veterinary education continues with a recent joint visitation to a university in New Zealand and planned visitations to Australian universities in coming years, in addition to our schedule of domestic visitations.

In May last year, RCVS Council member Professor Susan Dawson and Practice Standards Inspector David Wadsworth visited Massey University in New Zealand, in conjunction with representatives from the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Although some improvements were recommended, which we will be monitoring on an ongoing basis, continued recognition of the BVSc degree from Massey was approved by our Education Committee.

In May of this year, RCVS Council member Professor Malcolm Bennett will also be taking part in a follow-up visitation, with the AVBC, to James Cook University in Queensland, Australia, while a joint international visit to Murdoch University in Perth, Western Australia is planned for 2016.

In the UK, Professor Susan Rhind from the University of Edinburgh will be chairing a visitation to the University of Cambridge's Department of Veterinary Medicine in March, along with representatives from the AVBC and the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE).

In November this year, Professor Stephen May (pictured) from the Royal Veterinary College, and Deborah Kochevar from the AVMA will co-chair a visitation to the Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies at the University of Edinburgh, with colleagues from EAEVE and the AVBC.

Then, in March 2016, David Wadsworth will chair a visitation to the School of Veterinary Science at the University of Liverpool.

A golden year for veterinary nursing

BVNA 50th anniversary and new Royal Charter

Just three months into the year and 2015 is already proving to be very significant for veterinary nursing and a year in which we hope there will be greater recognition of veterinary nurses as true professionals in the eyes of both the animal-owning public and in practice life.

Not only has our new Royal Charter given veterinary nurses long overdue recognition as a fully regulated and qualified profession but it is also the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the British Veterinary Nursing Association (BVNA). To celebrate this auspicious year the BVNA has gone through a re-brand with a new website and logo and will also be using this anniversary as a springboard for promoting the profession.

Fiona Andrew (pictured), President of the BVNA, said: "We are delighted that the new Royal Charter has come in to effect. Successive Councils of the BVNA have worked tirelessly over the years to have veterinary nursing recognised as a profession, and it is a delightful co-incidence that this recognition comes in the 50th year of our Association.

"We would like to send our thanks and congratulations to the College for the effort that has taken place to make what once seemed like an impossible dream a reality.

"The BVNA has welcomed the support from the British Veterinary Association in recognising the importance of veterinary nursing in the development of the whole profession going forward."

One of those who would agree with the statement that full recognition for the profession once seemed like an "impossible dream" is Jean Turner, who qualified as a veterinary nurse in 1971 and has been a member of the BVNA for over 45 years. During this time she has witnessed many of the significant changes to the profession and speaks with pride about the current position

of veterinary nurses, both within practice life and society as a whole.

"I think that it is incredible how far the profession has come. I am very proud because it feels now that there is total recognition of what we do, which was very much lacking in the early days. When I first qualified I was Registered Animal Nursing Auxiliary (RANA) number 492, which shows how few of us there were. We were even pushing for a statutory register back then," she says.

"The new Charter is wonderful and such a change from those early days where some thought that we were glorified kennel maids! It is a very different situation now and veterinary nurses do a lot of outreach with the public. For example, I go to lots of cat shows where I am trusted to check the animals – this would have been unthinkable when I first started."

Although Jean feels that veterinary nurses now have the full recognition they deserve, she believes the next big step will be developing greater specialisation within the profession.

She adds: "More and more I have noticed that nurses are specialising – for example, I know two or three who concentrate on intensive care – so I feel that there is scope to have greater specialisation within the Diploma in Advanced Veterinary Nursing."

To mark how far the profession has progressed in the last 50 years, the BVNA will be attending a number of animal owner events, including Crufts in Birmingham this month, and the London Pet Show in May, to coincide with National Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month.

A promotional poster has been produced by the BVNA for May's awareness month and this will be included in the March edition of the *Veterinary Nursing Journal* which goes to all BVNA members. You can also register interest in National Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month by visiting www.bvna.org.uk/news/national-veterinary-nursing-awareness-month, where you can order a copy of the poster and other promotional items, as well as enter a competition which will reward individuals, colleges and practices which go above-and-beyond to promote the profession.

In addition there is also a dedicated National Veterinary Nursing Awareness Month Facebook page and the BVNA Twitter account (@bvnauk) will also be promoting the 50th anniversary, as well as the awareness month.



Support for overseas graduates

New dates for CPD course

We will be holding more of our popular CPD courses for overseas graduates on 28-29 May at the Novotel Manchester West and on 30 September and 1 October at the RCVS in London.

The events, organised jointly by the RCVS, the Veterinary Defence Society (VDS) and the British Veterinary Association (BVA), aim to equip overseas graduates either working or contemplating working in the UK with the skills and knowledge they need to be part of the UK veterinary profession.

The first day of each event is free and will include the following topics:

- What it means to be a veterinary professional in the UK
- Tips from an overseas vet who has succeeded
- Support available
- Developing your skills and knowledge
- Identifying and securing the right job
- Contracts and employment law basics

The free days (28 May or 30 September) will be followed (29 May or 1 October) by master classes in communications skills provided by the VDS in a popular role-play format with professional actors, which will cost £160. It is possible to attend either or both days in each two-day event.

Booking for the May event will be opening shortly, in the meantime, please email Fiona Harcourt on f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk to register your interest in attending.



Members of BVNA Council and some of its Regional Co-ordinators came to the College for a 'Meet the RCVS Day' in January, where they were given the opportunity to find out more about what we do and meet members of VN Council and College staff.

Winners all round!

We announce two competition winners

Visitors to the London Vet Show in November last year took part in our 'Advance to go' game and entered our competition to win a Kindle Fire.

The lucky winner was Samantha Calder, an RVN from the PDSA in Warwickshire, who correctly identified three ways to read the RCVS Code of Professional Conduct (online, in hard copy, or via the app). A delighted Samantha said: "It was my first year at the London Vet Show, and I found it excellent, with very good lectures and exhibition. Winning a Kindle Fire was the icing on the cake!"

"It was my first year at the London Vet Show, and I found it excellent, with very good lectures and exhibition."

VPMA/SPVS Congress

Meanwhile, Sinead Armstrong (pictured), a veterinary surgeon from the Ark Veterinary Centre, Surrey, was the lucky winner of our prize in the exhibitor competition at VPMA/SPVS Congress, held at the Celtic Manor Resort, Newport, in January.

Sinead correctly guessed the percentage of veterinary premises that are under the ambit of the Practice Standards Scheme – 51% (although this has since increased to 57%) – and received a luxury hamper of goodies.

"It was yet another excellent conference. A unique blend of thought-provoking lectures, mixed with time to chat with exhibitors, which resulted in me winning this wonderful hamper, donated from the RCVS, and topped off with an amazing social programme," said Sinead.



Annual pilgrimage to Birmingham

Join us at BSAVA for talks, questions and competitions

If you are heading to BSAVA Congress in Birmingham (9-12 April) please do come and visit us on the stand (108 in the Barclaycard Arena – formerly the NIA), where the team will be on hand to answer your questions about the Vet Futures project, our Mind Matters Initiative, Advanced Practitioner and Specialist status and the new Charter – among other issues.

Visitors to the stand will be able to play our 'Shape your future' game and be in with a chance of winning a Sony Smartwatch 3. Or they can take away one of our Vet Futures fortune cookies, which reveals a further chance to take part in Vet Futures – and win a Kindle Fire – by entering our 'Headlines of tomorrow' competition.

You can also pick up one of our free Mind Matters 'banner' pens, which contains useful information about sources of help on mental health and wellbeing issues.

Lectures

On the Saturday, RCVS President Stuart Reid and BVA President John Blackwell will be presenting the Vet Futures story so far, including an overview of research to date, and asking for your views on where you see the profession in 2030. The session will take place on 11 April in ICC Hall 7 from 11.05-12.45.

"Visitors to the stand will be able to play our 'Shape your future' game."

You also have an opportunity to catch up with developments on the Practice Standards Scheme, when Practice Standards Group (PSG) Chair, Jacqui Molyneux, and PSG member, Pam Mosedale, present 'PSS – a pathway to improvement', as part of the Management Stream on Friday 10 April, 16.50 to 17.35, ICC Hall 6.

Going to Guildford?

Join us for debate

Our next Regional Question Time (RQT) meeting will take place in Guildford, Surrey, on Thursday 19 March, and this time we will be trialling a new format, in response to feedback from delegates at previous events.

The event will start at 6.30pm with a buffet, then, from about 7.15 we will hold independent veterinary surgeon and veterinary nurse Q&A sessions, so that the issues relevant to the two groups can be discussed. Everyone will then reconvene for the second half of the meeting to discuss topics which affect the whole of the veterinary team. The event will finish at approximately 10pm.

The panel will comprise President Stuart Reid, VN Council Vice-Chair Liz Cox, CEO Nick Stace and Registrar Gordon Hockey. Invitations have been sent to all those vets and VNs within reasonable travelling distance, although all members of the practice team are welcome. Please sign up at www.rcvs.org.uk/QTGuildford by Monday 16 March.

If you can't make it, you can still keep track of the topics being discussed by following us on Twitter (@RCVS_UK) where we will summarise the evening using the hashtag #RCVSRqt.

Practice Standards surgeries

In the afternoon before the event we will also be

holding a number of free 45-minute Practice Standards Scheme surgeries with PSS Inspector Ean Garner-Richardson. These will take place between 12 noon and 5pm and are available for those who want to find out more about the Scheme or prepare for an upcoming inspection.

To book a PSS surgery, please contact Fiona Harcourt, RCVS Events Officer, on 020 7202 0773 or f.harcourt@rcvs.org.uk.

Catch up on the issues

Reports from previous RQTs, including those held in Carlisle and Dundee during November 2014, can be found at www.rcvs.org.uk/news-and-events/regional-question-times.

Gearing up for a celebration

RCVS Day is 10 July: save the date

This year's RCVS Day – our AGM and Awards Presentation – will take place on Friday 10 July at One Great George Street, Westminster, London SW1P 3AA.

As well as AGM business and the investiture of the new RCVS President for 2015-2016, we will be awarding the RCVS Queen's Medal, the most prestigious honour that the RCVS can bestow upon a veterinary surgeon, to Lord Soulsby of Swaffham Prior (see page 4).

Also at the event, Honorary Fellowships will be bestowed upon:

- Alistair McLaren Lawrie BVMS MRCVS, general practitioner and contributor to animal welfare in Scotland

- Professor Donald Francis Kelly BVSc MA PhD FRCPATH DipLECVP MRCVS, veterinary pathologist
- Gordon Nicholson Henderson BSc MRCVS, whose career has been in veterinary marketing

And Honorary Associateships will be given to:

- Dr Michael James Francis
- Catherine Anne Phillips
- Phillip Sketchley

The VN Council Golden Jubilee Award will also be presented.

Those receiving awards will be contacted in due course, and a limited number of tickets will be available for members and veterinary nurses in early June – please see the June issue of *RCVS News*, and the veterinary press for more details.



Last year's VN Council Golden Jubilee Award winner, Hayley Walters (centre), celebrating at RCVS Day 2014 with family and friends.

Excel-lent chance to see pet owners

Change of venue for LPS

We will be returning to the London Pet Show (LPS) for the third year on 9-10 May – and this time there's a change of venue, with the event moving to the Excel Centre.

The LPS provides an excellent opportunity for us to explain the high standards that are set and maintained by the profession – and the steps being taken to advance them, such as the Practice Standards Scheme. The event plans to welcome 25,000 animal-lovers through its doors.

Our focus this year will be the veterinary team, including the new Advanced Practitioner status. The LPS takes place within National Veterinary Nursing Awareness month so will provide an ideal opportunity for us to explain the role and skills of registered veterinary nurses, and the need for protection of the title 'veterinary nurse'.

Webinars to watch

New topics added to the archive

Two new webinars have been added to the archive available at www.rcvs.org.uk/webinars, as follows:

- VNs and the Law, presented by Kathy Kissick, VN Council Chair, and Gordon Hockey, Registrar and Director of Legal Services, on 23 February
- What to expect from your veterinary practice, presented by Kathy Kissick and Bradley Viner, Vice-President, on 3 March. This webinar was designed to assist animal owners, but readers may find it of interest.

If there are any topics on which you would like to see a webinar produced, please let Ben Myring know, on b.myring@rcvs.org.uk.



We are here for you

New video explains our role

We've produced a new short video to explain our role to the public and the profession – under the theme 'We are here for you'.

The four-minute video outlines our role as a standards-setting body and explains how that journey starts with the approval of veterinary and veterinary nursing qualifications, through the registration of vets and nurses and the setting of standards via the *Code of Professional Conduct*.

The video also explains our role in monitoring continuing professional development, and advancing standards through the Practice Standards Scheme. Although the emphasis is on how the RCVS is a force for good in terms of setting and maintaining high standards throughout the profession, the video also explains what we do when something goes wrong.

Rather than including actors and a voice-over, the video features members of the Belgravia House team, shot in locations where what they do takes effect.

"The four-minute video outlines our role as a standards-setting body."

So, CEO Nick Stace was filmed at a practice in Victoria; Head of Education, Christine Warman, explains our role in education alongside students at the Royal Veterinary College; Advisory Manager Laura McClintock outlines the *Code* while wearing her wellies in a stockyard; Julie Dugmore, Head of Veterinary Nursing, explains CPD at an equine practice; Eleanor Ferguson, Head of Professional Conduct, is shown visiting a client and her dog; and Anthony Roberts, PSS Senior Manager, took a trip to an accredited practice in North London, complete with axolotls! Only Registrar and Director of Legal Services, Gordon Hockey, got off lightly, being filmed in the RCVS.

Many thanks to all of those members of practice staff and the public who assisted with the production of the video, including the veterinary teams at the Blue Cross Animal Hospital in Victoria, the Queen Mother Small Animal Hospital at the RVC, East Barnet Vets and the Plum Park Equine Clinic.

The video was first aired at the House of Commons on 4 March and is available on our YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/rcvsvideos.

ADR: on trial

Update on ADR trial progress

Our alternative dispute resolution (ADR) trial is being run in conjunction with the not-for-profit complaints resolution organisation Ombudsman Services (OS) and is aimed at resolving concerns raised about vets which do not fall within our statutory remit to take further.

Since its launch in November, and at the time of publication, 31 cases have been referred to the trial with initial decisions having been issued in relation to 14 cases.

Here is a short summary of those cases that have been decided so far:

- In seven cases, OS decided that the veterinary surgeon in question did not need to take any further action in order to resolve the concern raised against them. In two of these cases, OS recommended that the client should pay outstanding fees they owed to the veterinary practice.
- In two cases, the veterinary surgeon had already offered to make amends to the client – for example, offering to refund consultation fees or to pay for a memorial – and OS recommended that the veterinary surgeons maintain those offers.
- In three cases, the veterinary surgeon was asked to apologise and to make a goodwill payment to the animal-owners. The recommended goodwill payments ranged from £30 to £100.
- In one case, the veterinary surgeon was asked to provide documentation to the client with an overview of clinical actions taken.
- In the remaining case, the veterinary surgeon was asked to provide a post-mortem report in language that was understandable to the client and without photographs.

The decisions made by OS are not binding on the parties. A case study based on one of the decisions can be found below.

The trial has been extended to November (see page 6), when the results will be reported to RCVS Council. For more information on the trial, please visit www.rcvs.org.uk/adr.

ADR trial case study

Dan took his two rabbits, Hazel and Thumper, to see Sarah (a veterinary surgeon) to be castrated. Later the same day, Jane (a veterinary nurse) went through the post-operation information with Dan before discharging the rabbits.

The day after the operation, Dan noticed that Hazel was dragging one leg. Dan took Hazel back to the vet that afternoon and Sarah examined him. She diagnosed him with an open fracture to his right hock and gave him treatment. Dan raised a concern with the RCVS that the fracture had been caused during the castration surgery and refused to pay for Hazel's treatment as a result. The case was passed to OS as part of the ADR trial.

As part of their investigation, OS spoke to Sarah, Jane and Dan, as well as taking advice from a panel of veterinary advisers. Jane told OS that the rabbits were hopping around at the post-operation appointment, and OS accepted her account. In light of this, OS concluded that the fracture had not been sustained whilst Hazel was in Sarah's care and had more than likely occurred after she had been discharged. OS determined that Sarah's treatment of Hazel had been appropriate, and therefore she did not need to take any further action in order to resolve the dispute. As a result of their findings, OS recommended that Dan pay the treatment fees.

***Please note, the names of the parties have been changed to protect their identities. Recommendations made by the OS are not binding on either party.**



Report to Council, March 2015

PIC Chair Jerry Davies

Since the last Report to Council there have been four Preliminary Investigation Committee (PIC) meetings, in October, November, December and January. Of the 28 new cases considered by the Committee during this period, five were closed; five were closed with advice issued to the veterinary surgeon; three were held open, seven were referred for further investigation; seven were referred to solicitors for formal statements to be taken; and one was referred to the RCVS Health Protocol.

The PIC is also investigating 48 ongoing cases and has referred two cases relating to one veterinary surgeon to the Disciplinary Committee.

Health and Performance Protocols

There are 16 veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Health Protocol, and four veterinary surgeons either under assessment or currently on the RCVS Performance Protocol. Two veterinary surgeons, both of whom had been on the Health Protocol for some years, were recently discharged having been successfully assessed as fit to be so.

One case involved a veterinary surgeon who had attempted suicide in 2012. The RCVS was notified via the police. The veterinary surgeon was assessed by a specialist psychiatrist who made recommendations for future management which the veterinary surgeon followed, giving formal undertakings to the RCVS. Management included interventions by local health teams and ongoing support from the Veterinary Surgeons' Health Support Programme. Support was also provided via the practice where the veterinary surgeon worked and regular reports were provided from a workplace supervisor.

The other case involved a veterinary surgeon who, in 2011, had self-reported medicines irregularities and depression. The veterinary surgeon also gave undertakings to the RCVS on

management and underwent medical treatment and counselling, during which time support was provided by the Veterinary Surgeons' Health Support Programme.

Discharge from the Protocol was greeted by the veterinary surgeons as "fantastic news", with thanks to the PIC for "their help and understanding".

Veterinary Investigators

During the period between 9 October 2014 and 8 February 2015, the four Veterinary Investigators and the Case Managers carried out 28 announced visits, one unannounced visit, two health-related visits and two review visits.

The Chief Investigator and Veterinary Investigators are currently assisting four police forces and one Trading Standards Executive with cases that involve: two bogus veterinary nurses; the illegal use of the postnominals MRCVS; conspiring to supply controlled drugs; and, conspiring to commit fraud.

RCVS concerns investigation procedure

The new process for handling concerns has been operational since early August 2014 and good progress is being made. The new procedure places an emphasis on better communication both with those raising concerns and vets. Case Managers are making telephone calls to those raising concerns within two weeks of receiving them, in order to discuss matters and to try to manage their expectations. Case Managers are also contacting vets by telephone to advise them when concerns have been raised. The aim is to reduce the strain imposed on vets by forewarning them of the issues, discussing these and the concerns process and any information needed and, as appropriate, to reassure them as to the likely outcomes. There has been a generally positive response to this. Communication is mainly now undertaken by way of email in order to speed the procedures up and reduce formality.



Report to VN Council, February 2015

VNPIC Chair Lynne Hill

Since the last report to VN Council there have been four meetings of the Veterinary Nurses Preliminary Investigation Committee (VNPIC) in September, October, December and January 2015. Between October and January, nine new concerns were received, of which four are currently under investigation by the Case Examiners Group and five have been closed.

New cases considered

During the same period, two new cases have been considered, of which one was closed with advice to the RVN and one is being considered under the RCVS Health Protocol.

Ongoing investigations

The VNPIC has two ongoing cases which are adjourned, pending the outcome of criminal court trials against the respective RVNs. These cases will be included in a future report.

Health Protocol

There are currently two RVNs on the RCVS Health Protocol, one of whom is being considered pending the signing of undertakings.

Referral to VN Disciplinary Committee

Since the last report, the VNPIC has not referred any new cases to the VN Disciplinary Committee.

The full reports are available at www.rcvs.org.uk.

Mr Warwick Seymour-Hamilton

Inquiry concerning: application for restoration to the Register

DC decision: application refused

Registration status: name removed from Register on 18 July 1994

On 11 February 2015 former veterinary surgeon Warwick Seymour-Hamilton had his third application for restoration to the Register refused by the Disciplinary Committee (DC).

Mr Seymour-Hamilton's name was removed from the Register in 1994 following an inspection of his premises in Orpington, Kent. The condition of his premises, equipment and facilities was so poor that it constituted a risk to the health and welfare of animals brought to the practice and brought the profession into disrepute.

Mr Seymour-Hamilton made two previous restoration applications in July 1995 and June 2010. Both of these were refused on the grounds of poor preparation for re-entering practice life as, in both cases, he had made no attempt to engage in continuing professional development or visit and observe other veterinary practices.

Representing himself at the hearing, Mr Seymour-Hamilton said that, since the 2010 hearing, he had further developed an interest in herbal medicine and, after visiting a number of veterinary practices in continental Europe, had attended the College of Naturopathic Medicine in Dublin, gaining a qualification in herbal and naturopathic medicine. He told the DC that he currently worked as a herbalist and naturopath with human patients but wanted to widen his work and research to include animal patients.

The DC was concerned by his answers to a number of questions, Mr Seymour-Hamilton having described the hearing as an 'exploratory meeting' and indicating a lack of knowledge in a number of areas to do with veterinary practice and its regulation. It felt that this demonstrated a fundamental lack of understanding as to its function and terms of reference.

Professor Noreen Burrows, chairing the Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: "The Committee expresses its surprise and concern at the lack of preparation for this hearing by the applicant, given that these issues have arisen at his previous restoration hearings, and that the result of a positive finding in favour of him would be his ability to practise unfettered as a veterinary surgeon forthwith."

In particular, the Committee highlighted Mr Seymour-Hamilton's lack of understanding of the regulatory framework for veterinary practice

Mr Frank Eric Ainsworth

Inquiry concerning: failure to provide adequate care to a dog diagnosed with heatstroke

DC decision: severe reprimand and warning as to future conduct

Registration status: name remains on Register

On 30 January 2015, veterinary surgeon Frank Eric Ainsworth received a severe reprimand and warning as to his future conduct after being found guilty of serious professional misconduct by the Disciplinary Committee (DC).

The five-day hearing into Mr Ainsworth, from Lowestoft, Suffolk, was in respect of his treatment of a German Shepherd dog, Ash, whilst working as a locum veterinary surgeon at Pinebank Veterinary Surgery in Kent. The charge against him was that, on 18 July 2013, he failed to provide adequate care to Ash, whom he had diagnosed with heatstroke, and who had been presented to him by his owner Mr McMahon. In particular, this charge included Mr Ainsworth failing to admit Ash to the practice for urgent treatment, failing to transfer Ash to another practice, failing to suggest euthanasia, and failing to offer Mr McMahon adequate treatment advice.

On presentation to Mr Ainsworth at Pinebank between 7am and 8am, Ash was collapsed and his symptoms included diarrhoea, vomiting, lethargy and a high temperature. On being told that Ash had heatstroke and was unlikely to survive, Mr McMahon asked Mr Ainsworth whether anything could be done to save him, but was told the practice did not have the necessary treatment facilities. Mr McMahon was advised to take Ash

home and use cold running water, ice packs and fans to reduce his temperature.

After Mr McMahon took Ash home and showered him in cold water, his wife telephoned Pinebank to complain. The practice receptionist, Ms Baldock, confirmed to her that there was nothing they could do. Mrs McMahon asked if her husband could take Ash to Pinebank's out-of-hours service provider, but was told this was not an option.

Eventually, Mr McMahon took Ash to an alternative practice, Sandhole Vets, where the dog was treated by the practice owner, Mr Johnson. Mr McMahon was told that Ash was unlikely to survive and that, if there was no improvement, he should consider euthanasia. Around 45 minutes after the treatment was started, Ash suffered seizures and died shortly thereafter.

Mr Ainsworth told the DC that he did not think Pinebank had adequate facilities to treat a dog of Ash's size for heatstroke and was unaware that it had a hosepipe and watering can. In addition, he did not believe it would be practical and effective to reduce Ash's temperature with wet towels and considered that the main priority of reducing the temperature would be best done at home. Furthermore, Mr Ainsworth said that he intended to make enquiries about referring Ash to another practice once his temperature had been reduced at home. He was about to search the internet for alternative practices when he overheard his colleague's phone conversation with Mrs McMahon and assumed that Ash had been taken to another practice.

Mr Ainsworth accepted that he did not discuss euthanasia with Mr McMahon, which he said he would have done at a later stage if Ash's condition did not improve. He also accepted that he made

no further enquiries of Ms Baldock and did not telephone Mr McMahon to check if Ash had gone to another practice.

Before reaching its decision the DC considered, in detail, the testimony of a number of witnesses and experts for both the College and Mr Ainsworth. It rejected Mr Ainsworth's evidence that his treatment plan was to follow up his investigations into Ash's case or contact Mr McMahon by telephone. It concluded that, if such a plan had been in place, he would have informed Mr McMahon of his intentions. The DC also rejected Mr Ainsworth's evidence that he had overheard the conversation between Ms Baldock and Mrs McMahon. It said it was not credible that, if he had heard the call, that he would not have made further enquiries.

"The Committee considers that veterinary surgeons are required to be proactive in their duty of care and refer cases when they do not have the ability to deal with cases appropriately."

The DC found the charges proven. It concluded that Mr Ainsworth should have made further enquiries about the treatment facilities available at the practice for cooling Ash and, if he felt that they were inadequate, should have advised Mr McMahon to take the dog to another practice. It also felt it was inappropriate for Mr Ainsworth to have sent Ash home to the care of his owners while in a critical condition without first seeking the option of referral. Furthermore, the DC felt that

Mr Denis Patrick Cronin

as set out in the *RCVS Code of Professional Conduct*, the requirements of continuing professional development and what 'fitness to practise' meant, beyond the practical issues of his physical and mental capacity.

“The Committee expresses its surprise and concern at the lack of preparation for this hearing by the applicant, given that these issues have arisen at his previous restoration hearings.”

Professor Burrows added: “Based on all of the evidence available to the Committee it is very clear that he has failed to satisfy... that he is fit to be restored to the Register and this application is therefore dismissed.”

Mr Ainsworth should have given Mr McMahon the full range of treatment options available, including oxygen and fluids as Ash was in a collapsed state, before he left the practice, as well as discussing euthanasia.

However, the DC did accept, on the basis of Mr Ainsworth's clinical records, that he had given advice to Mr McMahon on how Ash could be cooled down at home, although it felt the advice could have been more detailed.

In deciding its sanction for Mr Ainsworth the DC accepted that his actions were not motivated by indifference to animal welfare but that, on this occasion, there was a serious lapse of judgment. The Committee also considered that this was a single incident on Mr Ainsworth's first day at the practice and that he had been confronted with an emergency situation before the practice had opened. It accepted that Mr Ainsworth had an unblemished career over the past 38 years and that he had produced character references from other veterinary surgeons attesting his integrity, skill and conscientiousness.

Judith Webb, chairing the Disciplinary Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “The Committee has concluded that the sanction proportionate to Mr Ainsworth's conduct is one of severe reprimand and warning as to his future conduct.” She added: “The Committee considers that veterinary surgeons are required to be proactive in their duty of care and refer cases when they do not have the ability to deal with cases appropriately.”

The DC also recommended that Mr Ainsworth should undertake, in the next 12 months, continuing professional development with an emphasis on emergency and critical care and client communication.

Inquiry concerning: application for restoration to the Register

DC decision: application granted

Registration status: name restored to the Register on 22 December 2014

On Friday, 14 November 2014, the Disciplinary Committee (DC) directed that a veterinary surgeon from Dundalk, Co Louth, should be restored to the RCVS Register, having been removed in 2005 for serious professional misconduct.

Denis Patrick Cronin was originally struck off the Register of Veterinary Surgeons in February 2005 having been found guilty of seven separate charges of serious professional misconduct. At the time, he was based in the West Midlands.

These charges included euthanising a cat in an inappropriate place (his own car) and when consent was in doubt; failing to adequately explain the treatment of an animal to a client; threatening and abusive behaviour towards complainants and employees; failing to respond promptly to requests from the RCVS regarding complaints; and, inappropriate handling and transportation of animals, including the use of excessive force on a dog.

“The Committee takes the view that the Applicant who appears before it today is likely to be a wholly different person to the person before the Committee in 2005.”

Mr Cronin's original application for restoration to the Register commenced in June 2014, but was adjourned due to the DC's concerns about the future welfare of animals should Mr Cronin be restored to the Register; his efforts to keep up to date in terms of skills and developments in practice since his removal from the Register; and, the need to ensure public protection.

The DC detailed a range of evidence that Mr Cronin should compile to support a properly planned return to practice programme, and adjourned the hearing for three months to allow him the time to do so.

However, at Friday's hearing, the DC had first to consider a submission from the College that Mr Cronin was currently practising as a veterinary surgeon at a practice in Omeath, contrary to the evidence he gave in June 2014. It concluded that there was no compelling evidence to support this allegation and accepted his denial of it.

The DC proceeded to consider the efforts to which Mr Cronin had gone to address the concerns it raised in June. It found he had undertaken over 100 hours of continuing professional development, deriving “considerable and up-to-date knowledge”; he had developed an understanding of the limitations of his practice and accepted that he should concentrate principally on his specific

practice interest (racing greyhounds and pigeons); he stated his intention not to undertake surgery and to avoid working in isolation by joining a general practice; and, he had spent much time observing the practice of other veterinary surgeons.

As Mr Cronin had been suffering from a psychiatric illness in 2005, the DC had, in June 2014, been principally concerned about the protection of the public. It was therefore reassured at the hearing to receive positive reports from two separate doctors working under consultant psychiatrist Dr Geraldine Lyster, and to hear encouraging accounts from Dr Kevin Dodd and Professor Robert Wall, who together represented Mr Cronin's ongoing support team.

He was also complying with the medication regime prescribed for him, and described consistently to the DC the strategies he would deploy to address stressful situations and anger management. His enthusiasm and levels of engagement with audiences at public meetings was reportedly most impressive.

Noting that Mr Cronin's clinical skills were not amongst the principal concerns when he appeared before the DC in 2005, it concluded that the future welfare of animals would not be at risk, should he be restored to the Register. It also noted that he enjoyed significant public support, both from those whose animals he had treated in the past, and those in the greyhound racing and pigeon fancying fraternities.

Judith Webb, chairing the Disciplinary Committee and speaking on its behalf, said: “The Committee takes the view that the Applicant who appears before it today is likely to be a wholly different person to the person before the Committee in 2005. He recognises his limitations, his interests and his priorities (which include caring for his elderly mother and aunt).

“... the Committee allows [Mr Cronin's] application and directs the Registrar to restore him to the Register. In so doing it acknowledges that there will be no restrictions on his practice, save those which he will impose upon himself.”



Full details of disciplinary hearings are available at www.rcvs.org.uk/disciplinary.

The creation of one body politic...

As we celebrate our new Charter, we look back to the first

On 17 February the Registrar attended the Houses of Parliament to receive the first new RCVS Supplemental Charter for nearly 50 years. To mark this historic occasion, veterinary historian Bruce Vivash Jones and RCVS Knowledge Head of Library and Information Services Clare Boulton look back at events leading to our first Royal Charter.



The most prized historical document kept at Belgravia House is not on view, it is held safely under lock and key. While of little intrinsic value it is without question the most important manuscript held by the College.

The document is the Royal Charter, granted and sealed on 8 March 1844. It established the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, enabled the creation of the veterinary profession and achieved a goal defined in 1790.

Royal Charters are a peculiarly vestigial institution, they are interesting declarations as they have a perpetual effect and are a last remnant of the exercise of extra-parliamentary power by a monarch, although nowadays Charters and their supplementary additions are only issued with prior government approval. Since the date of the first Royal Charter in 1066, over 980 have been sealed, of which about 750 remain in use.

The Charter is known as 'letters patent' and this is the most important feature: it is a type of legal instrument in the form of a written order issued by the monarch, which grants the recipient, in this case a group, the status of a corporation. Typically they were written in high quality calligraphy on vellum with a seal pendant attached: so that the seal does not have to be broken to read the document. For the embryo veterinary profession the granting of the Charter meant that they were now a corporate body and a legal entity, having all the powers of a 'natural person'.

The goal defined in 1790 was included in the 'Plan' published by Vial St Bel, the first Professor of the London Veterinary College, but drafted and written by Granville Penn. It set out what was required to teach veterinary medicine and also stated that when the College had gained full stature it should be "formally incorporated by Charter", like other medical Royal Colleges.

The activity to gain a Charter started following the death in 1839 of Edward Coleman, the controversial Principal of the London College. The then graduates of the London and Edinburgh schools, the latter established by William Dick, represented a split profession. London graduates received a certificate of qualification that was accepted for admission to the Army and the East India Company, the two largest employers. Admission was controlled by Coleman who was also Principal Veterinary Officer (PVO). Edinburgh graduates received the certificate of the Highland Agricultural Society of Scotland, which Coleman refused to recognise.

"Since the date of the first Royal Charter in 1066, over 980 have been sealed, of which about 750 remain in use."

There was much argument and call for reform. FC Cherry, a 'reformer' was appointed PVO after Coleman and he allowed Edinburgh graduates entry to the Service. Also in 1839 the Edinburgh School became a College.

In 1838 the Royal Agricultural Society (RAS) had been set up by Charter, which, at the instigation of William Youatt, included a clause empowering it to take measures to "improve the veterinary art in its application to cattle, sheep and pigs". The RAS then offered financial aid to the College if they would broaden the syllabus beyond the horse. However, it was Youatt's action that provided the intellectual preliminary for the reform movement.

In 1840 a deputation of veterinary surgeons presented a memorial to the Governors of the College on behalf of themselves and 315 others demanding that it should apply for a Charter which would control unqualified practitioners,

increase student fees and introduce regulations for student 'apprenticeships'. The Governors rejected these proposals.

As a result the reformers, led by Thomas Turner, William Goodwin and Thomas Walton Mayer, quietly had a Petition for a Charter drawn up for submission to the Privy Council. They were able to also obtain the signatures of William Dick and the three London College teachers: William Sewell, Charles Spooner and James B Simonds, at that time the four leading veterinarians in the country. Feeling that they could now ignore the Governors of the College, the reformers went to Prime Minister Peel's Home Secretary with their plea for the incorporation of the profession and the "creation of one body politic..." arguing that its granting would "materially contribute to the advancement of the veterinary art and the respectability of the veterinary profession". The Charter was drawn up and sealed on 8 March 1844 – 171 years ago.

Membership was limited to those certified by the two existing colleges, and by any new colleges which might receive royal approval, as being qualified to practise, and future students of the colleges had to pass examinations set by the new Royal College.

'Veterinary Surgeon' now became a professional title conferred only on those who were members of the Royal College, which was invested with the legal advantages of a corporation. Thomas Turner was elected as the first President.

Much had been accomplished and much more would be achieved in later years as Supplementary Charters would be granted, to date seven, which would strengthen the role of the RCVS and therefore of its membership.

Targeting global EBVM

Fresh round of grants made

We are pleased to announce that **Target Grants 2** has been awarded to an **international group of EBVM Network members, led by Dr Kristen Reyher from the University of Bristol and Dr Rachel Dean and Dr Marnie Brennan from the University of Nottingham, who will be developing a free online EBVM course for practitioners. The course will allow practitioners to learn more about the specific skills required to make evidence-based decisions, such as study design, database search strategies and critical appraisal.**

Our Head of Research, Rita Jorge, says: "We are thrilled that leaders in EBVM education from across Europe and North America have combined their knowledge and resources to develop a resource that practitioners can use. It will support the work of journal clubs, Knowledge Groups and individual professionals, all of whom will be able more confidently to participate in writing and sharing Knowledge Summaries – practical summaries of the evidence behind a clinical topic with clear conclusions."

She adds: "These courses will be available free to practitioners all over the world under a Creative Commons licence."

First round of EBVM Network Grants

Meanwhile, we have launched the inaugural round of EBVM Network Grants – yearly grants available exclusively to EBVM Network members, which are open to any projects that further veterinary medicine's body of knowledge and evidence-based practice.

"These courses will be available free to practitioners all over the world under a Creative Commons licence."

We will be looking for applications that directly support veterinary professionals in practice to make evidence-based decisions. Applications can be for academic projects or practice-based projects, provided that the outcomes can be freely used and widely disseminated. Veterinary nurses are particularly encouraged to apply.

Expressions of interest are being accepted for the EBVM Network Grants until 24 April 2015. To find out more, please visit rcvsknowledge.org/grants.

To join the EBVM Network, please visit www.surveymonkey.com/s/EBVM_Network.

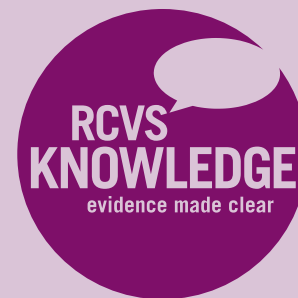
Practitioner toolkits now available

We have launched two free new toolkits, one for EBVM and one for Clinical Audit.

This step-by-step support can be downloaded from:

EBVM Toolkit: www.rcvsknowledge.org/toolkit

Clinical Audit Toolkit: www.rcvsknowledge.org/clinical-audit-toolkit



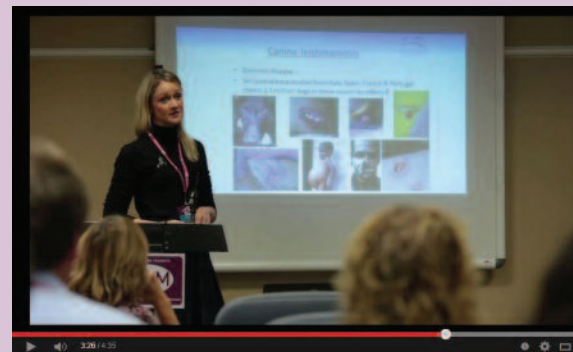
EBVM on the record

EBVM 2014 resources

Session recordings from the 1st International EBVM Network Conference are now available to view online. Over 50 international talks can be found on our YouTube channel (bit.ly/EBVM2014), including:

- Evidence-based medicine in the life of a GP at the coal-face
- Potential sources of bias in veterinary literature
- Generating evidence on disorder prevalence in cats in England

Meanwhile, you can view the conference posters at rcvsknowledge.org.



Putting evidence-based skills into practice

EBVM Skills Day 2015: tickets on sale

Tickets are now available for **EBVM Skills Day, an affordable one-day seminar focused on evidence-based veterinary practice. Taking place at Church House, London, on 30 October 2015, the event will offer six hours of continuing professional development (CPD) for all members of the veterinary team.**

The Skills Day closes the gap between EBVM theory and daily veterinary practice, equipping practitioners with the tools they need to make evidence-based practice work for them. Pam Mosedale, a veterinary surgeon who is a member of the Practice Standards Group, the coordinating body of the Practice Standards Scheme, will be speaking about clinical audit at the event. She says that veterinary professionals are ready to make evidence-based changes in their workplaces.

"I speak to practitioners every day who want to make sure they are giving the best possible care

and doing the right thing for their patients by ensuring that each clinical decision is evidence-based. EBVM Skills Day will give them the tools to do this. Clinical audit will give them the ability to monitor the quality of care given," she says.

"This is an exciting event – something that practices will benefit from enormously."

Jacqui Molyneux, Chair of our Board of Trustees and Managing Director of Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital, agrees that EBVM in practice is "gathering momentum."

She adds: "This is an exciting event – something that practices will benefit from enormously, and which has a real business case as well as an ethical case."

The seminar will focus on pragmatic, workplace-based EBVM, with sessions covering topics such as:

- How to design a study in practice
- What questions to ask a drug rep
- Statistics for the practitioner

It will include plenary sessions from Mark Baker, Director for the Centre of Clinical Practice (National Institute for Clinical Excellence), and Elizabeth Jackson, Lecturer in Business (Royal Veterinary College).

The event combines engaging plenary talks and interactive breakout sessions with plenty of time for discussion and networking.

Tickets are on sale now for £170 (inc VAT). To view the programme and buy tickets, please visit www.rcvsknowledge.org/events.

For sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities, please contact Marcus Pugh, Head of Fundraising, on Marcus@rcvsknowledge.org.

RCVS News at a glance...

Too busy to read the lot? Start here for important dates for your diary and story summaries, so you can decide what might be worth reading in full.

1 Doctor will see ewe now

Overwhelming support for Dr title decision.

2 Pick 'n' mix

Make your election choices by 5pm, 24 April.

Advance to go

First Advance Practitioner list published.

3 It's a Tuf job

Chris Tufnell elected Vice-President.

What goes on tour...

Join us on the Vet Futures UK roadshow.

4 Mind Matters million

Funding pledged to support mental health.

Medal-some

Lord Soulsby to be awarded Queen's Medal.

5 Council takes the high road

Next meeting at Scottish Parliament.

What's next?

CEO reviews progress and looks to the future.

6 No card fees

Pay with debit or credit card with no charges.

Marathon man

President runs London Marathon for mental health charities.

Trial time

ADR trial extends to October 2015.

7 Governance go-ahead

Council agrees next step in governance review.

Musical Chairs

All change for statutory committees, and Education Committee.

What's VMD doing?

Sign up for VMD e-newsletter.

Welsh chip delay

Welsh microchipping introduction delayed until 2016.

8 Charter party

House of Commons event celebrates historic achievement.

Golden ticket

Nominate for VNC Golden Jubilee award by 24 April.

Lording it up

Chance to intern for Professor the Lord Trees.

9 PSS consultation

Have your (final) say on PSS review.

Premises fees please

RVPP fees due by 1 April.

No third parties

Please complete registration renewal yourself.

Want more?

Adding more qualifications to your Register entry.

10 Mad men

New guidance on advertising and publicity.

Anti-doping rules

Zero-tolerance approach from new BHA rules.

Equality help

New guidance on complying with Equality Act.

11 Safety first

New advice on cytotoxic drug handling.

Whistle while you work?

NMC Chief on why whistleblowing is vital.

12 Why I'm hAPpy

Two APs talk about their decision to list.

13 Education update

Revised degree criteria, PDP extension and Year One Competences review.

Learning on the job

CPD audit results for vets and VNs.

14 International VNs

New accreditation on horizon for overseas VNs.

Fond farewell, Freda

We say goodbye to an outstanding Director of Education.

15 For your approval

Degree accreditation visits at home and abroad.

Happy 50th, BVNA!

We celebrate VN profession's achievement this year.

16 Winning streak

We announce LPS and VPMA/SPVS Congress winners.

Where are you from?

Two dates announced for overseas graduate CPD course.

Brum bound

Lots to discover at BSAVA Congress in April.

17 Surrey with a meeting on top

Join us with your questions on 19 March in Guildford.

Skateboarding chickens?

Expect the unexpected at the London Pet Show.

Date for your diary

RCVS Day will be held on 10 July in London.

18 Video nice

New film outlines our role for public.

Alternative outcome

Read an ADR trial case report.

19 Healthy statistics

PIC Chair reports first two successes from Health Protocol.

VNPIC report

Update on cases being considered.

20 DC decisions

Mr W Seymour-Hamilton refused restoration; Mr FE Ainsworth severely reprimanded and warned as to future conduct for failure to provide adequate care; and, Mr DP Cronin's application for restoration granted.

22 In the beginning there was the word...

... and the word was the first Charter

23 Gain the Knowledge

Skills Day, toolkit, posters, videos and grants – all for you.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2015

19 March

Regional Question Time: Guildford
View election candidate videos online

23 March

PSS consultation closes

24 March

Meet the RCVS Day

31 March

Vet renewal fees due

1 April

PSS and RVPP fees due

9–12 April

See us at BSAVA Congress

16 April

Vet Futures: Belfast

24 April

Your vote must be in by 5pm
Golden Jubilee deadline

9–10 May

See us at London Pet Show

20 April

Vet Futures: Exeter

21 April

Vet Futures: Cambridge

18 May

Vet Futures: Manchester

28–29 May

Overseas CPD: Manchester

4 June

Vet Futures and Council meetings: Edinburgh

17 June

Vet Futures: Swansea



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